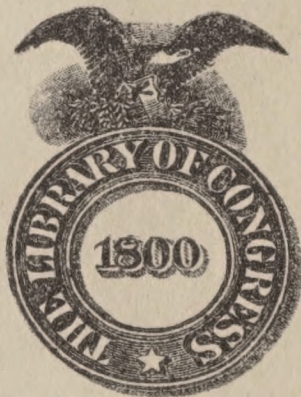




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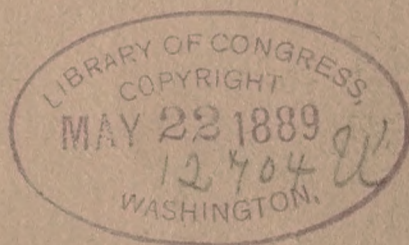
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THE DEVIL AND I.

By Ellimore (pseud.)

Allen, Linda M S
11

What! Shall we call him a man—him who hath done this evil? He is not a man, he is a devil; a devil who “stole the livery” of a man, in which to play the villain.



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Here, within this tomb, let me make a request; a request to the one who may find these pages that I shall have written, who may offer them to a public curious enough to read them, to read and to pity: that—whether I be living or dead; whether this tomb, in which I am now buried, be indeed my tomb when I am dead; or whether, by some miraculous intervention, I may again be permitted to live in the outer world of living life—that, in offering them, these pages, to the people of every where, they may be especially offered to the people of the West.

ELLINORE.

THE DEVIL AND I.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

I am aware that what I write in the madness of a horrible reality, in the despair of a horrible suffering, will be looked upon as the clever product of the imagination, or the dramatic effect of a dramatic talent, perhaps as the fevered fancies of a diseased brain, anything, everything, but what it is—the truthful recital of an actual experience. Therefore, I do not write in the belief that what I write will be received as true, indeed, scarcely with the thought that it will be at all received. I have no reason to hope that it will ever be seen by the outer, living world, of which I am no longer a part.

I write because it is a relief to write. To think perpetually, without any alleviating distraction, would in time end in madness—that dire relief, that frightful forgetting of one's self, that I have not yet the courage to covet. To tell what I have thought,

what I have felt, is of itself a distraction. The simple act of writing with one's hand relieves the working of the brain. One comes to write of one's self as of another self; an intense desire to tell the truth as one has seen it, as one has felt it, the effort to tell it, helps this illusion.

I shall not exaggerate. I have neither the desire nor the necessity to do so. The truth, strange as it is, is superlatively true.

I am no longer among the living. I write from under the vault in which I am buried. Others have been buried alive, but they have speedily and effectually died. I am perpetually dying. However, the power to feel grows less as the dying goes on, and I am really dead to every sense but a dulling, numbing pain that never leaves me. This is the last phase of suffering; for suffering has its limit, and once it is reached, to experience again the fulness of pain, the victim must have again every sense reborn, requickened by hope. I have nothing to hope for, and I am only waiting for the hour when I shall be as dead to myself as I am now dead to the world.

CHAPTER II.

What a blessed, satisfying experience is the retrospect of a tranquil life ! Of a childhood as fair and sweet as childhood's dreams ; of the noontide of life still loving and beloved ; of the evening of life with its serene present, its uneventful but unregretted past—the whole existence, ushered in from the beginning and rounded out to its close by a succession of ordinary but happy experiences that insure it an extraordinary peaceableness ; a peaceableness much desired but so impossible to possess by other and less fortunate beings who seem, from their very birth, to have been marked by destiny for a turbulent existence. Or, is it that the organization—sensitive, passionate, and impulsive—of these beings, invites the emotional, the tragic, the mentally, and often morally, devastating experiences—that like bad spirits roam abroad—as the diseased body receives more readily the floating germ of a terrible malady ? However this may be, to these beings there is always something happening or likely to happen. They are continually upon the scene either as the sport of a comedy or as the victim of a tragedy. No condition of serene enjoy-

ment is ever assured to them. An unseen hand seems always to be pushing them to the summit of enjoyment or of success, from which, when attained, another unseen hand always assures the fall. Thus their entire existence is a series of shocks.

From my very birth my existence has been an agitated one. Extraordinary experiences have continually thrust themselves upon me. Nothing in the past has been sure to me, but the surety that an undisturbed condition would be disturbed. No possession has been permanently mine, but this, the latest—the possession of despair.

The woman I called my mother was a miser. She had never been married, and yet she was my mother. In order that I might never forget these two facts—that my mother was a miser, and that she had never been a wife—I was constantly reminded of them. Little children, girls, as well as boys—and later, grown girls and boys—seemed to be happier in reminding me of that which was a torment and a shame to me. I never heard my mother called by her name, as other mothers are called by their names; she was always “the Miser,” and I was always “the Miser’s daughter.” Derision, contempt, and abuse were given to me, as my due; as gifts, as smiles and loving words are given to happy children, as their due. How cruel even

little children are to that which is helpless—children to whom a loving God has given a loving mother !

Heaven to my pained child existence was peopled with sweet faced mothers who loved their children. My mother hated me. To have a mother whom every one despised, to be hated by one's mother, to have had a nameless father—is there a condition more mournful for a child ?

Why did my mother hate me ? I did not know, unless it was that she hated my father for the shame of my birth—that had been the result of a fault equally hers. “ You are so like your father, and I hate you ! ” This was the conclusion of her every burst of ill humor ; and I learned in my heart to pity that unknown and despised parent, of whom all I had ever known was that I was like him. She had never said whether it was in face or in temperament that I resembled him ; but child as I was, in observing how totally I was unlike my mother, I congratulated myself on my immense advantages of appearance and disposition, and I was grateful to my unknown father.

These advantages were my compensation. I had not the love of a mother nor the friendship of child companions ; but I had that which singled me out from other children of other mothers—an uncom-

mon face and an uncommon mind. In spite of my wretched dress, strangers in the town where I lived, looked admiringly at me; visitors of the school especially regarded me, and spoke caressingly to me—strangers and visitors that did not know my shame, and that my mother was a miser. Little by little I made the discovery that a large part of the hate of the children and their mothers was due to my attractive face and clever mind. This knowledge, that I had something that they who despised me could not take from me, something desirable to have, something they envied me the possession of, this knowledge was the one satisfaction of my child life; and with time I ceased to long for the affection that was lavished upon other children, and was less sensitive to the contempt and the abuse of those about me.

The one purpose that took possession of my thoughts, was to acquire all the knowledge it was possible for me to acquire from my present advantages. I was ambitious not simply to excel others, but to do the best I was capable of doing. There was present with me, in a vague way, the impression that I was not to be accountable to those who despised me, for what I was; but that I should be accountable to myself, my soul self—that had no part in the world about me—for what I might yet

be. There was present, too, the vision of a time when my life in its accomplished purposes would be worthy of the respect of others whom I had not yet seen, as I myself would be worthy of the affection of others whom I had not yet seen. This determination to do, this vision of the done, made me even then, in a measure, indifferent to the unattractive life about me; an indifference that gave me a certain triumph over those who had a contempt for me.

The one formidable enemy of my happiness and my success in those early years, as he was subsequently the destroyer of my happiness and success in later years, was Marcus Pancho. He was the only child of a wealthy Spanish lady, who was a confirmed invalid, and who, after a prolonged and fruitless search for a climate that would prove efficacious in restoring health to her weakened body, finally decided to come to America, and to settle in the town where my mother lived; a town that was noted for the peculiar invigorating effect of its climate, and for other sanitary privileges that Mrs. Pancho hoped would be beneficial to her.

The sudden advent of this distinguished looking, and apparently wealthy foreigner who was to live among them, as well as the singular beauty of the little Marcus, was a wonder, a more than a nine

days' wonder, to the people of the town. However, Mrs. Pancho conducted herself as exemplary people do; and if there was anything extraordinary in her present, or in the past of her life, she succeeded—against the questioning tact of curious people—in keeping always, and effectually, the knowledge of it to herself.

Marcus being the only child, and the idol of his mother, was petted, indulged, and spoiled, by her and her household, to a degree that distinguished him even among those known as superlatively spoiled children. Later, at an age when he most needed the advantages of a firm and judicious government, the increased feebleness of Mrs. Pancho, and her subsequent death, left Marcus virtually master of himself, and of the household over which he ruled with the cruelty and caprice of a small tyrant. Heir to a large fortune, possessing no instincts, either from nature or from education, of self denial, he was led to believe there was nothing that his will could not bring about, or that his money could not buy. Fascinating in manner as he was tyrannical, possessing many natural gifts that he used for evil, he was admired as well as disliked, he was fawned upon as well as feared by those who served him, and by those he imposed upon.

From my earliest recollection, my existence was identified with his. My mother had made her first appearance in the town, and her final settlement there, some time before the advent of Mrs. Pancho. No one knew how my mother first introduced herself ; but, despised as she was by every one, she was permitted to enter, as often as she wished, the elegant home of Mrs. Pancho ; and it was always understood that she came to see the boy, for whom she had conceived a passionate liking. And what seemed still more strange, was that the little Marcus clung, with what seemed to be an instinctive fondness, to the woman who petted him and abused her own child.

No one doubted the genuineness and the unselfishness of my mother's affection for the boy. Mrs. Pancho had wished, for the child's sake, to make the wretched dwelling of my mother something like a home, at least in appearance ; but, my mother doggedly refused all offers of assistance, and seemed to enjoy, more than anything else, the bringing of the boy, from time to time, to the miserable hovel we called our home. When Marcus was old enough to come himself, he came of his own will.

I never ceased to wonder at all this. But what seemed strangest to me, was the transformation of my mother into an unselfish, almost tender mother

towards the little Marcus, who was nothing to her, from the cruel, dreadful woman she was towards me, her own child. Other people wondered too, I knew; but when they ventured to express to her what seemed to them a strangeness and an impropriety in the intimacy, Mrs. Pancho had but one answer: "What can I do? It is a whim of the child's to like the woman, and you know I can never refuse him anything." Then she added, with an affected indifference, "But he will outgrow it, this whim, he will outgrow it."

But Marcus did not "outgrow it;" and after the death of Mrs. Pancho, he came oftener than ever to my mother's home. And it was a singular fact that he enjoyed privileges that might have been accorded to a favored child—more favored than I. He came at any hour he chose to come, and there was no part of my mother's habitation that he might not appropriate.

Naturally enough, an instinctive hatred of Marcus was the product of the first recognition of my mother's liking for him. Was it this hatred of mine that incited in him a corresponding antagonism to me, and that prompted him to augment, in every conceivable way, each condition that might render my existence still more unhappy? Or was his dislike the result of my mother's teaching?

Surely he found in her an untiring ally in his persecutions of me; and there was no restriction in her presence of his methods of tormenting me.

But it was more than this mutual dislike of me, that, after the death of Mrs. Pancho, continued to unite these two. It was a curious resemblance to each other. Between this handsome, petted, and spoiled young tyrant and the hard-featured, repellant, and despised woman, was the attraction of like to like. Their natural instincts of selfishness, cruelty, and viciousness, were similar in character and intensity. Sometimes I even fancied that the expression of one face was singularly the expression of the other.

However this may be, it would be impossible to designate the particular ills, the small tortures, inexhaustible as his vindictiveness, which the diabolical talent of my tormentor, applauded by my mother, enabled him to invent, and of which I was the victim. I do not remember a day of these early years that was not one of intolerable persecution.

To be fully prepared for my lessons during the day, I arose in the morning at the first dawn of light—for my mother's rigid economy did not permit the luxury of a lamp or candle. As soon as it was practicable, Marcus appeared; and his

coming was always preceded by a series of terrific thumps against my door, and a vociferous shouting of, "Get up! Get up!" This thumping and this shouting was invariably continued until my tortured nerves, that could endure no more, forced me to open the door, and to permit him to enter. This interruption of my morning hours was rarely omitted, and while I studied, the expectation of it was of itself a torture; so that it was with the greatest difficulty that I accomplished all that I had determined to accomplish.

At other times, during my most uncertain hours, that is, during the hours that I could most surely count upon the interruptions of Marcus, I read. For, unlike my mind when I studied, nothing could entirely distract my thoughts from the pages which I was reading. In this way I succeeded in reading all the books that were lent to me by Mr. Sinclair—a benevolent man in the town, and the only being that had ever been kind to me, and who subsequently befriended me in a manner that influenced my entire future.

Going to and from my home, I was liable at any time to fall into traps or pitfalls, that the adroitness of my persecutor had prepared for me. Sometimes a rope, concealed in the long grass of the meadow, through which I hurried along—I was always

obliged to hurry—tripped me in passing, throwing me violently to the ground. Thus I bore always upon my body, as well as upon my mind, some painful mark of his cruelty. Wherever I went, whatever I did, it was with the fear—that was sure to be realized—of undergoing some disagreeable experience, some humiliating ordeal; or of encountering some unknown evil brought about by the fateful ingenuity of this evil-minded boy. This fear was to my young life like the terror that one feels when alone in the darkness of a strange place—the terror of advancing, at any moment, upon some unknown and frightful peril, more frightful because unknown.

Although it was well known that Marcus had reserved me in a special way for his persecutions, no one would have suspected, from my outward manner, the degree of pain that I suffered from them. I bore them apparently with a stoicism that was half the result of pride, and half the result of a conviction of the utter uselessness of any opposition on my part. But the cunning of Marcus was not to be deceived by any seeming indifference of mine. He knew, as well as I, the extent of my suffering due to him—a suffering that was to my child life an agony; and this knowledge was an enjoyment to him.

However, nothing so effectually combats the

assaults of ill humor and a vindictive temperament, as a tacit and persistent refusal to resent them. It may not exhaust the persecutions, but it will, to a degree, diminish their ardor—for the heat of humor grows warmer with each provocation, as the fire burns more fiercely with every added particle of fuel; and despite the efforts of my tormentor to discourage me, and the many difficulties that had retarded my progress, at the close of the term that marked me fifteen years of age, I stood at the head of every class. This was an honor that entitled me to a free tuition at a private school, where the higher branches were taught. This school, which was exclusively for girls, had been established, and was maintained, by the excellent Mr. Sinclair, for the purpose of encouraging those who had natural ability, and who were diligent enough to render themselves worthy of its privileges.

CHAPTER III.

The day I entered this school was an epoch in my life. The conviction fastened itself upon me that upon what I should accomplish there, would depend my future of independence or subjection, of enjoyment or discontent. Every year, to the pupil who should successfully pass the examination of each study, and who should also take the first prize for excellence in whatever study was decided upon, the benevolent founder of the school had offered a scholarship in any institution of learning the pupil should prefer, where every advantage would be furnished, at his expense, to perfect her in whatever study she would choose. The school had been established for three years, and no one had yet been able to accept the generous offer of Mr. Sinclair. I felt certain that I should pass successfully every examination; and I resolved to take the first prize for excellence in whatever particular study should be decided upon. I was still more determined to succeed when it was announced that the prize was to be given that year, at the close of Commencement day, to the pupil who had written, for that day, the best essay.

When this announcement was made, I trembled in every nerve with a joy and satisfaction that were already the sweets of success. How could I fail? In composition no one had presumed to equal me. In the whole town I had no rival in that. How grateful I felt to Mr. Sinclair! The kind, good man! I was sure he had thought of me when he decided that the prize should be for composition, and I determined that my benefactor, my one friend, should not be disappointed in me; that I would win the prize; that I would deserve the scholarship. And then I should go away; go to that far off city—I had already chosen New York. I should leave in triumph, probably forever, the town where I was hated, and where I had so much suffered. Above all, I should effectually rid myself of Marcus Panchó; and in the gladness of these thoughts, and of my coming emancipation, the humiliations of the past were forgotten, the still painful persecutions of the present almost unheeded.

During the weeks that followed, I was in a fever of excitement. I ate little and slept less. It was at this time that I made a strange discovery. Whether it was the natural development of a singular susceptible nervous organization, or whether it was the effect of overwork and constant nervous excitement, I do not know; but the fact is, that I

found myself to be an unconscious doer of actions, a victim of a malady, the phenomena of which science has not yet been able entirely and satisfactorily to explain—in short, I found myself to be a somnambulist. I made this discovery one morning after a night preceded by great mental fatigue. I had been working at a problem in geometry, which I had found extremely difficult, and which finally, tired out, I had left unfinished and had gone to bed. The next morning, to my amazement, I found the problem neatly and correctly worked out upon my slate. I persuaded myself that I had finished it before going to bed, and had forgotten the fact; but the same thing occurred again and again. Not only problems left undone at night were found done the following morning, but essays I had left ready to copy were found neatly copied, and lessons unlearned the evening before, I knew perfectly in the morning; in short, anything that I had not been able to do, or to finish, when I lay down to sleep at night, I found done, or finished, when in the morning I awoke: so that I could no longer doubt the truth—that I was the victim, to an extraordinary degree, of a malady which—in rendering one's actions so uncertain and so mysterious—is so much to be dreaded.

The weeks passed rapidly. It was the evening

preceding Commencement day. I had already arranged everything in perfect order, so that nothing should embarrass my preparations for the day that was to be so eventful for me. The white muslin dress, provided for me by Mr. Sinclair, lay on the chair; the dress that I thought I should never want to wear again, after wearing it on the morrow, but that I should lay away in memory of that glad day. I looked at the well worn books with a sense of security in the belief that my memory would not fail me at the moment of recalling what their pages had taught me. I took up my essay, tied with lavender ribbons—the essay that was to decide my fate. I read it once more, for the last time, and with the satisfactory thought that it was as perfect as I could make it; then I laid it on the table beside me. I remember then to have seated myself in a low chair, where I sat quite still, and of thinking, hardly conscious of what I thought. Suddenly, it seemed to me—for in my preoccupied state I had heard no sound—the door opened, and Marcus Panchito entered. That however was no surprise to me; for it was an intrusion that occurred every day, and at any hour. Marcus came when it pleased him to come; and there was no corner in my room, however sacred or secret, that he did not consider equally his. I had accustomed myself to

think, and to a degree to act, precisely as though he were not present; so that I saw him, as in a dream, open the drawer and take out the original copy of my essay, and apparently read each page to the end, and then replace it again in the drawer; after which he took up the finished copy, that I had laid upon the table, and read it, in its turn, and put it back also, precisely where he had found it. Then I heard him say,—

“Ah, Ellinore, my little beauty! You are too proud to let any one know how much you fear me, how much unhappiness you owe to me; and for this long pretended indifference to me, I owe you yet a revenge. I know your ambition, I have divined your thoughts. You believe that after to-morrow you will be free; that you will be able to go away in triumph from the town that despises you, and from me whom you hate. But to-morrow—who knows what it may bring about? For you must not forget that I owe you a revenge.”

I had seen all that he had done, and I heard all that he had said, without the desire or the attempt to interfere or to reply; and perhaps it was that I was already in the condition of a reverie, and that in this condition the eye unconsciously seeks the object that another wishes it to seek, that I fixed my eyes steadfastly and persistently

upon the burning, glittering gaze of Marcus. After this I have no recollection at all of what followed. When I awoke the moon was shining brightly, making it light as day in my room. Marcus had gone, and I was still sitting upon the low chair. The town clock struck twelve. I had slept five hours. What instinct made me go directly to the table where I had laid the copy of my essay? With a curious feeling of relief I saw it there, in the moonlight, lavender ribboned, as I had left it. I felt singularly drowsy and heavy headed, as though my sleep on the chair had not been a refreshing one, and I threw myself on my bed—wretched though it was—with a sense of relief.

It was late the next morning when I awoke; and I congratulated myself on having finished every preparation, that it was possible to make, the evening before; as I had only time to dress before the bell rang, which was the signal for the calling together of the pupils to the Hall.

The day was unusually fine, and everybody was there. The exercises proceeded without any annoying interruption, and to the evident satisfaction of every one. The last class was called; the final examination was ended; and throughout the entire day I had not failed once, nor had even made the faintest approach to a failure. It began to be

whispered about that at last there would be a pupil to take the scholarship. I felt sure that I was that pupil, and that every body knew I was. I felt it in the almost deference with which the teachers treated me; I saw it in the kindly and interested faces of the audience that turned from time to time significantly upon me; above all, I saw it in the expression of pleasure and content that beamed for me from the glances of the good Mr. Sinclair. All this, the feeling of being somebody, of being treated as other fortunate and happy beings are treated; as though I were worth being looked at, talked about, even smiled upon by those who had always despised me or pitied me—all this, was giving me a new and a delicious sense of living. How sweet it was—this first glimpse of happiness! How glad the world without looked—the world that had always seemed so sad! How like fathers and mothers, and sisters and brothers, the people around me seemed—the people that had always been so cruel!

I had heard all the essays read, and they were so much poorer than mine, that I felt there could be no question about the decision. The prize was as surely mine as though it were already in my keeping. And it was with a deep feeling of thankfulness, perhaps, too, of exultation, that I took my place amid a murmur of applause, and began to

read distinctly, and in a well modulated voice, the first paragraph of my essay. Then I received a sudden shock—a frightful shock. My head swam round; it was with difficulty I kept myself from falling. I must have been deadly pale.

At once I realized what had happened. Some one—and there was but one whom I could suspect—had stolen the finished copy of my essay, and had left, in its place, the first, imperfect copy. The neat outside covering tied with lavender ribbons, was all that had been left to me of the pages upon which I had spent so much time in correcting and perfecting; while these—the pages I held in my hands, the pages from which I was expected to read—these were the crude, imperfect, and unsatisfactory result that always characterizes the first, hastily written expression of one's thoughts.

But I continued to read; mechanically, and in the same tone, as though nothing had occurred, even while I was thinking of crying aloud to the people; of telling them what a shameful, cruel thing had been done to me; of trusting myself, in the agony and desperation of my outraged sense, to their generous appreciation of the situation. Ah! If I had been like other daughters of other mothers, I might have done this; I might have counted upon the kindly feeling of those about me. But in my

distress came the bitter consciousness—that had in my brief happy moments left me—that I was only the “Miser’s daughter;” that I had always been despised and derided; that no one would believe what I could only suspect; that even if they should believe it, they would not admit it—knowing that without that admission my failure would be complete. For I knew that I should not be able to prove my suspicion,—that Marcus Pancho had stolen my essay—the suspicion I felt to be true; for if he had done me this evil, he had effectually done it; in a way to leave no trace of having done it, and I should never be able to produce the missing essay.

In the rapid traversing of these thoughts through my fevered brain, my tortured sense traversed a universe of suffering. Between me and the pages I was reading, the past of my life, with its painful scenes, presented itself; the future, with its sickening rehearsal of what had been, and its own dreadful, unknown possibilities; the present, the frightful present, with the faces of the audience before me, surprised, amused, offended—all this, was spread out before me, around me, like one huge, grotesque, horribly grotesque panorama.

How I got through it I do not know. I must have led for the time a dual existence. The self that read on, mechanically, deliberately, with an unconscious pride and determination to make the

best of it; the self that passed out and down through the file of frowning teachers and disappointed spectators; the self that held out courageously to the end—of that self I have only a vague consciousness. But of the self that saw everything, that heard everything, that suffered everything, of that self I was conscious, horribly conscious all the time.

The prize was given to another, but not to one who had successfully passed the examination; and the President expressed his regret, "that the young lady whom they had hoped to benefit by the scholarship, had so poorly appreciated the advantages offered to her, as to have made no effort to obtain them." And as he expressed himself thus, every eye turned upon me. This frightful allusion to that which was a calamity for me, this frightful misapprehension of the truth, completed my misery. Instinctively I turned, as if to seek in some face a pitying look—and my eyes rested only upon the mocking, smiling, diabolically smiling face of Marcus Pancho. It was more than a gleam of satisfaction that flashed from his burning gaze upon me—it was a revelation. I no longer felt that he had stolen my essay, I knew that he had stolen it. The day that was to have been for me a triumph, he had made of it a humiliating failure. This failure was his revenge.

CHAPTER IV.

The memory of my experience through the following weeks, is in itself a dreaded nightmare. It was not alone the increased persecutions of Marcus, and the multiplied taunts of others grown more bold and unfeeling after my public humiliation—but it was a sore heartedness that knew no relief in its painfulness. It was the bitterness of a mighty disappointment; the utter lack of consolation; the sickening hopelessness of living itself. I had been so sure of my emancipation; so sure of what I would do to prove myself worthy of the scholarship; so happy in thinking of what might happen of good to me—and all at once this surety and this happiness had been taken from me. I had no reason to hope, for I had no reason to believe that I should realize what I hoped for.

So I thought then; so others have thought at some time or other in their life. At these times we say, or we think, that nothing else than a miracle can change the situation. Well, miracles are all the time taking place. Who of us can not remember something to have happened when he knew of no possible chance of its happening? Who of us has not

stood appalled and helpless before that which seemed the certain approach of a frightful catastrophe—when suddenly he was lifted above it, and beyond it, by an intervention he could not possibly have foreseen, that no one could have foreseen? What are these but miracles—these events whose sudden coming, wholly unlooked for, wholly unprepared for, decide the destiny of a life? And these miracles, what are they, but the perpetual witnesses of the universal vigilance, the universal guardianship of a Divine Father?

Whence have we the belief that “the Lord helps him who helps himself,” if in the continual working out of life’s problem, there are not results that furnish us correctly this belief? There is no doubt but that the earnest working, worthily aspiring, ever alert individual, who steadily pursues the determination to be other than he is, and better than he is, arrives at the consummation of his desire more readily and more effectually than he, who also dissatisfied with his condition, idly longs and idly waits for some force stronger than himself to bring about the wished for result. It is not that for the first named individual more and better opportunities occur; but that his present industry rewards him with a present fitness to take advantage of these opportunities; to lay hold of them, and to make the

best of them. It is simply that he has made himself able to make use of the stepping-stones that a good Providence has furnished for the getting out of the slough of mediocrity.

A miracle took place for me. An opportunity to end my present state of unhappiness was unexpectedly proffered to me. There were future possibilities again to hope for, again to live for.

Looking into a shop window one morning, I saw an advertisement that interested me. It was the announcement, for the following evening, of a lecture to be given by a celebrated woman. The subject of her lecture was "Woman and her work." I resolved to go; to hear for myself what this wise woman would say of woman and her work. I went home, and took from my little bank fifty cents—all that it contained—the price of admission, and purchased my ticket. The next evening I was among the first to present myself at the door of the lecture-room, and I was shown to a seat near to, and directly in front of the distinguished lecturer.

How little we know of ourselves and of the provision a near future has made for us! How could I have suspected, that from what I should hear that evening, the force would be furnished me to bring into useful and healthful action the mental resources that I possessed? And yet,

it is true, that the utterances which I felt the speaker believed to be profoundly true, had much to do in the re-enforcing of the courage, the patience, the self-reliance—of a sort of irrepressibleness, that has been the prominent characteristic of my nature, and which had I possessed only to a moderate degree, I should not to-day be living in a mental condition to tell the strange story of my life.

At the close of the lecture, when the crowd had gone, and only a favored few lingered near the speaker, I approached her, and said in a timid voice

“Please, Madame, will you write your name in my album?” My “album” was a homely one, of my own making.

The lecturer gave me a kind, but curious look, and then—to the evident disgust of those about her, who looked disapprovingly at me—she took the book, and wrote in a plain bold hand, “The world belongs to those who take it.” Then adding her name, she gave the book back to me; but seeing that I still lingered, she said, placing her hand on mine,—

“What is it, my poor girl—what troubles you?”

Her look of interest, the kindness of her voice, the caressing touch of her hand—all this, made

me heedless of the presence of others who had always been unkind to me; and with tears in my eyes, and a passionate pleading in my voice, I cried,—

“Oh, dear lady, you have written in my book, ‘The world belongs to those who take it.’ Please, please tell me how to take it!”

“Dear young heart!” she said, smiling, “it would take me a long time to tell you how, as I understand it, to take the world. But come to me to-morrow, and I will tell you what I mean by the words I have written in your album.”

The hour that I passed with that wise and noble woman was one of the most helpful to me of my life. But it was not alone the ideas themselves, expressed with a peculiar earnestness and positiveness, that made so profound an impression upon me. It was also a sympathy with the speaker herself; a sympathy with the past of her life—whose history she confided to me—with its much labor and many discouragements, its bitter humiliations and disappointments, before she had arrived at her present state of usefulness and distinction. And from this counsel and this confidence—this baptism of courage and hope—I went back to my comfortless room with the resolution to quit it forever. How and when, I did not know. But had I not just

learned, that with the resolution and the will to bring about a wished for result, a way to do it would ultimately be found. "Ah," I cried, "if only I could find my lost essay! I might be able, even now, to prove myself worthy, if not of the practical assistance of Mr. Sinclair, of, at least, his friendliness and his advice."

In the fixed belief that Marcus would not have taken my essay at all, without effectually doing away with it, I had no thought of the possibility of ever seeing it again. It was therefore with profound surprise, that one morning I heard the astounding announcement from Marcus, that he had not stolen my essay, but that I myself had hidden it; that I had hidden it the evening before Commencement; that I had done it while I was asleep. Then as I looked at him in the scorn of my incredulity, he added, taking out his watch, and holding it before my gaze,—

"Ellinore, you see it is now almost eleven o'clock. I am going to prove to you the truth of what I have stated, by declaring, that if you look steadily at this shining object you see in my hand, I will take you, without your knowing it, to the place where you have hidden your essay."

I recalled the fact of his having entered my room on the evening preceding the day that had been so

fatal for me. I recalled, too—that which I had not until that moment done—all that he had said and done, until the period of my falling asleep; and of my awakening, hours after, and of my surprise that I had gone to sleep at so unusual an hour, and that my slumber had been of such long duration. I remembered the fact, that I thought was known only to myself, of my night walking and night working, in short, that I was a somnambulist—and I felt sure that Marcus had in some way got possession of my secret. But all that I had ever done in my night working, had been only a continuation of what I had begun before going to sleep, or what I had in my mind the desire to do; and that I could have done anything so contrary to my will as to conceal my essay; or that Marcus had anything to do with my falling asleep, and that while I was asleep he could take possession of my will to a degree to make me the doer of an evil to myself—all this, I did not for a moment believe: I did not then know enough of my malady to suspect it possible to believe. It was therefore only with the suddenly conceived idea to feign a belief in his words, to pretend a submission to his will, to appear to be asleep—in the faint hope that he would take me to where he himself had hidden the essay—that impelled me, without a dissenting word, to fix my gaze steadfastly and persistently upon the shining object he held in his hand.

After this I remember nothing until I awoke. It was then half past twelve o'clock. I had been asleep an hour and a half. Marcus was standing directly in front of me. I had walked more than a mile, through an unfrequented road, to a thick wood; I had seated myself upon a rock, and in my hands I was holding my lost essay. I had done all this without having the slightest recollection of it. I had not been conscious of anything during that one hour and a half.

Was there a mingling of pleasure with the astonishment and terror with which I regarded my essay? Perhaps so; but it vanished at the sight of Marcus, who was looking at me with an expression of enjoyment that appalled me—the fiendish enjoyment afforded him by the discovery of a sovereign means of distressing me. He explained to me—with the jubilant manner of one about to enjoy a savory delectation—that the evening before examination, when he had entered my room—as usual without my consent—and had read over the corrected essay and the uncorrected one, it had been certainly with the idea of changing them if possible unnoticed by me, in the hope that, in my haste the next morning, I would discover the change too late to save me from great embarrassment and trepidation; and that when he had uttered his ominous

words to me that evening, looking at me in a manner that was meant to intimidate me, he had no idea then of the magnificent revenge that was even then making ready for him; and that it was while he was looking at me, that the continued fixedness of my gaze—that he had always been accustomed to see turn from him—the continued absence of movement, and the lack of expression in my face, surprised him; that finally, upon examination, he found that I was asleep; my eyes, however, remaining open and fastened upon the spot where his eyes had first attracted my gaze. It was then that he made the discovery so precious to him—that my sleep was hypnotic; that I was in a passive condition, and subject to his will; and that subsequently I did all that he willed me to do. That at his bidding I had changed the essays, removing the lavender ribboned cover from the finished pages, and placing within it the unfinished pages; and that following him, still at his command, to the woods where we then were, I had carefully and effectually hidden my essay in the hollow of a fallen tree—that he pointed out to me. He confided to me that his enjoyment on the day of my failure had not been complete until he saw that, notwithstanding the sudden pallor of my face, for which he alone knew the cause,—I continued to read, with wonderful self-control, to

the end, the unfortunate essay that assured my failure; and that the positive assurance that he possessed so extraordinary a means of revenge, had only been furnished him in this last proof—in

which I had come, without knowing it, and taken my lost essay from the place where I had unconsciously hidden it—which had convinced him, and me, too, he presumed, that he could produce upon me a hypnotic or somnambulistic condition, during which I was the slave of his will.

While Marcus was delighting himself with this explanation, I was revolving in my mind the horrible advantage that he possessed in possessing the secret of my strange malady; an advantage that furnished him—the being that hated me, and that was happiest when he was persecuting me—with a power whose dreaded possibilities made me shudder with an instinctive fear; a power that I should not be able to resist nor to overcome.

However, there is for us this merciful provision by nature; that once fully persuaded an ill cannot be avoided, we find that we are already prepared, by an unconscious fortifying of ourselves, to support it. Or, it may have been in my case, that the natural force of the will, the habitual persistency of purpose—the aforesaid irrepressibleness, that

was so large a part of my character, and which all my life, with the exception of this last frightful epoch, that I believe to be the closing in of my earthly existence, has enabled me to push through a succession of gigantic obstacles, always with a sort of success—that enabled me then, at that time of alarming discovery, to cease troubling over expected ill fortune that might, through some happy intervention, never come.

However this may be, as soon as Marcus had relieved me of his presence, I hastened to the home of Mr. Sinclair. I had decided to tell him everything, in the hope that his sympathy would justify my asking him for the pecuniary aid necessary to enable me to leave the town, and to fit myself, by a year more of study, for the avocation I had chosen. Of course, I would accept this assistance only with the understanding to return it as soon as I should be able to do so.

I was coldly received by Mr. Sinclair. The disappointment that my failure had brought him, had been all the greater because it was entirely unlooked for. He had not had, perhaps, more than others, great faith in my native goodness, but he had had an immense dependence upon my ability and my ambition. It had been told me that he had expressed himself thus; so that it was without an

encouraging word or look from the one being that had been my friend, that I told the strange story of my lost essay. I would not have told it to another than to him; I could not have hoped nor expected any one else to believe it. Neither did Mr. Sinclair believe it. I saw at once that he looked upon the story as another development of the "natural depravity" credited to me. Marcus, of course, would have been glad to have the privilege of denying all knowledge of the facts he had proved to me. There was only my statement to be depended upon, and I was an outcast—I was "the miser's daughter."

Never in my whole life had the injustice of the cruel prejudices, the unfeeling taunts of social superiors, the insults of those who were mentally and morally my inferiors—the life long persecutions of which I had been the victim—never had these so agonizingly impressed me, as they arrayed themselves before me then; never had the sense of the misfortune of being what I was, and the hopelessness of trying to be other than I was, taken possession of me in so distressing a manner; and no effort of my pride could prevent the expression of my pain in sobs, convulsive, heart-breaking sobs that would have touched the heart of any pitying being, and that certainly touched the heart of Mr.

Sinclair. To avoid looking at me, and perhaps to relieve his own agitation, he took up the much abused essay, and turning over the leaves, he read carelessly here and there; when all at once, becoming interested, he turned back to the beginning and read slowly, attentively, and, by the expression on his face, I was sure delightedly, to the end.

"What a pity, my child," he said, when he had finished the reading, "that you did not take the trouble to write an essay like this for Commencement day! This is what I expected of you! Same subject, too," he added, pointing to the title of my essay.

Then he still did not believe that I had written the essay for Commencement! Instead, it was probable that he believed, as others believed, that caprice and obstinacy, or a certain enjoyment—that was the result of a moral defect—at the thought of deserving the bad opinion of others, had prompted me to deliberately, to the surprise of every one, to offer an essay of which the ideas were so imperfectly and incoherently expressed. My silence, my apparent indifference, my seeming stoicism at the time of my failure, and after it, had rendered my misfortune of that day liable to this uncharitable construction; and I felt the imprudence of trying to persuade Mr. Sinclair of the truth. What did

it matter—now that I was again happy? My one friend had again faith in my ability, he had again faith in my ambition. He confided to me that he had always had a certain pride in thinking of my sure success, and that he had wished to give himself the pleasure of helping me to that success; that he believed that I would not again disappoint him, when he had made known to me what was his intention to do.

From the despair that hoped for nothing, to the gladness that hoped for everything—this was the miracle that the goodness of Mr. Sinclair wrought for me. It was all arranged before I left my benefactor that afternoon. I was to go away the following month. Mr. Sinclair was to defray all the expenses required to fit me for a teacher of elocution—for that was what I decided to be—which favor I was to remit as soon as I should be able, without embarrassing myself, to do so.

When it was known that I was going away, the boys and girls of the town were more unkind than ever to me, and my mother was more cruel. She made the preparations for my departure as difficult as possible. Marcus was a mystery to me. To my surprise he ceased his persecutions; but his attentions, which he offered me instead, were more painful to me than his persecutions had been. The day before my departure, he said,—

"Ellinore, you are very glad that you are going away from this town; but more glad that you are going away from me."

"Yes," I replied, "I hope we shall never see each other again."

"Ah! but we will, Ellinore, we will see each other again! I shall not leave you long, wherever you may be, without a sight of me; you would be too happy." Then after regarding me curiously, he added: "Ellinore, I am rich, I am handsome, I am intelligent. Others seem to like me, why have you never liked me?"

"You!" I cried, looking at him in amazement. "You ask me why I have never liked you! You, who have tortured me all your life, because you have hated me all your life!"

"No!" he replied, with a strange passion in his voice, "You have always been mistaken—and I must not tell you why. But, in spite of my persecution of you, it is you that have hated me; while I both love and hate you. Yes, I knew that would astonish you, but it is the truth. Away from you, I have an uncontrollable desire to see you, to be near you, to be good to you; that is why I am always intruding myself upon you. But your pride, your dislike, which I feel without your looking at me, without your speaking to me, your pretended indif-

ference to my existence, gives me also, the moment I am in your presence, the uncontrollable desire to torment you. I must be something to you, Ellinore ! I have sworn that you shall, if you will, owe to me henceforth the enjoyment of your life ; if you will not, then you shall owe to me the suffering of it. You will henceforth either brighten my destiny by your friendliness and affection, or I will shadow yours by the darkness of my revenge."

I had no reply to this. I was thinking that if what he had said were true, that his love for me would be as terrible as his hate ; that for him to love was synonymous with to have—to have with the intention to divert himself, to enjoy himself in the use and the abuse of his possession ; and that failing to possess, the passion of his soul to hate, would furnish him with an ingenuity to torture the object he coveted, to a degree inconceivable to the individual endowed with the heart and the soul of a man. For what is the being who is totally devoid of that which is God's gift to man—that spirit which prompts him to be a blessing and a joy to an object beloved, whether it be his own or another's ? What is the being that has nothing of the hero in him, nothing of the manliness that enables him to bear in silence the pain of a defeat which, had it been a triumph for him, would have insured the

unhappiness of another? What is the being who hates with a deadly hatred, who pursues, with a deadly intent to torture, to destroy the object that frankly refuses to be his? What is this being with no kindness in his heart, with no pity in his soul, with no heaven-born instinct in him? He is not a man—he is a devil.

Did Marcus divine the nature of my thoughts? Perhaps so, for he too remained silent; and this was our parting adieu.

CHAPTER V.

At last I was free. At last I was quitting, it might be only "for years," I hoped it would be "forever," the scenes that recalled, each one, an odious or a painful memory. I had the good Mr. Sinclair's blessing and encouraging last look to remember; I had a neat little wardrobe provided by the generosity of my benefactor; I had enough of money for my immediate wants, and my ticket, a small basket of lunch, and a letter of introduction also from Mr. Sinclair, to the Principal of one of the schools in New York; with these, all the possessions in the whole world that I could call my own, I, Ellinore, "the miser's daughter," was hurrying away as fast as the hurrying train could take me. And, as it should be to healthful youth, the unhappy past was forgotten in the content of the present. For the future everything might happen for me of good—and perhaps of bad; but I thought only of the good.

The Principal, to whom I gave the letter of introduction, and by whom I was kindly received, had charge of one of the leading schools in New York. As I wished to prepare myself for a teacher of elocution, I devoted the greater part of my time to

this particular study ; and I was so ambitious, so thoroughly in earnest, that at the end of a year I attracted the attention of the Principal, who, satisfied with my proficiency, made me an assistant teacher in the school. From that time my success as a teacher was so universally acknowledged, that at the close of another year, I decided to take charge of a private school, of which I was the founder as well as the Principal. I was still more successful in this effort than in any preceding one ; and, as heretofore, my success was largely due to the personal influence I possessed over my pupils. It was more than a teacher's authority, that compelled their respect ; it was a personal influence, that won their love.

My pupils were daughters from the select families of the city. It became the fashion to patronize me. In a practical way, this patronage brought me a small fortune ; in a social way, it brought me still more—the satisfaction of seeing myself thoroughly appreciated for what I did, and of feeling myself heartily loved for what I was. Pushed still further to the front in my efforts and my ambition, by this all-powerful social phalanx, I gave “special readings,” which resulted in the same astonishing success. I recited well ; and no entertainment, that would admit of recitation, at the homes of these ele-

gant and finely sensuous people, was quite satisfactory, so I was assured, without me.

Could any future, for me, that I might have dreamed of in the past, have been more replete with usefulness and with happiness, than was the present? Could I have hoped for a more pleasing compensation for the painfulness and the friendlessness of my preceding life? I was not only "on the height," but I was walking securely and tranquilly there. And from this security and this tranquility my fall was soon to be an unexpected and an effectual one.

Among my pupils was one who attached herself to me with an ardor and a persistency that won at first my affection, and afterwards my personal interest to an extraordinary degree. Mabel Livingston was the only representative of one of the wealthiest families in New York. The father and mother of Mabel were both remarkably handsome, while Mabel herself was quite the contrary. This homeliness, which she designated as her "heritage," while the parents enjoyed a wealth of personal attractions, was for Mabel a great misfortune. She never seemed to think of it as it was, a freak of nature, but as a misfortune for which her parents were accountable; a malicious donation she owed only to them. This strange hallucination embit-

tered every enjoyment of her own, as well as much of the enjoyment of her estimable father and mother; who, if it had been possible, would gladly have transmitted to her the beauty of face and form which they possessed, in the hope of bestowing also upon her the graces of an amiable disposition.

For all those whom she knew—except her parents—who possessed the charm of a handsome face, Mabel conceived a passionate liking. But there was always present with this liking, the bitterness of the regret that she also did not possess this charm, and the uncontrollable envy of it. Therefore, one can readily comprehend that her friendship, if desirable to possess, was also dangerous to possess; that while it might be a good to enjoy, it was possible to be an evil to dread. This conclusion, ultimately arrived at by each one of her companions, left her—as much as her lofty social position would permit—a stranger to any sincere expression of friendship towards her on their part.

Mrs. Livingston, who was deeply pained by the fact that her daughter was regarded in so unfortunate a manner—the knowledge of which she had extracted, imperceptibly to them, from the parents of Mabel's companions, as well as from Mabel herself; and who became discouraged by the continual failure of her own and her husband's efforts to

render their daughter happy, was intensely gratified to observe the sudden and sincere affection of her unfortunate child for one who returned that affection, and whose influence she believed would have the happiest effect upon Mabel. The poor woman was perhaps also delighted to be able conscientiously to shoulder the responsibility and the difficulty of correcting the unwholesome predilections of this strange young being, upon one who was so universally believed to be as worthy and competent as I was believed to be. And as to myself, it was perhaps an unconscious pride in every fresh evidence of the confidence and esteem of others—the confidence and esteem I had been so bare of in my suffering days; perhaps it was the ambition to accomplish for this girl what no one else had been able to accomplish; perhaps it was the natural result of my sincere affection for her; an affection to which her friendlessness among friends, and her unhappy disposition, made the strongest appeal—for I could not avoid the suggestion that she might be misunderstood, as I had been, and thus unconsciously abused, as I had been—perhaps it was for one of these reasons, or for all of them, that I accepted willingly, gladly, the labor and responsibility left unreservedly to me. However, be this as it may, I gradually became, with the grateful sanc-

tion of both Mr. and Mrs. Livingston, not only the instructress of Mabel, but her sole guardian, and almost her sole companion.

This period, then, of my history, was a useful and enjoyable one. I worked industriously and happily under the agreeable stimulant of the ever increasing esteem and appreciation of those who patronized me. Mabel's affection for me grew with her steadily growing improvement in temper and behavior; and her parents began to picture a future when they should be able to rejoice in the possession of so gracious and worthy a daughter. This gratitude, that I felt to be sincere, added to my own sense of the happy change I had brought about, was an ample compensation for the efforts I had made in the education of the heart, as well as the mind of Mabel.

My position was an enviable one. Every advantage that the money and influence of Mr. and Mrs. Livingston enabled them to furnish their daughter, for her improvement and amusement, was furnished also to me. Whatever I considered suitable for myself to see and to hear, was considered suitable, under my guardianship, for Mabel to see and to hear. I was keenly sensitive to the responsibility so wholly confided to me, and, until the occurrence of what I am about to relate, I had no reason to accuse myself for the smallest failure in this responsibility.

It was nearly four years since I had left the town that I hated, and in which still lived my mother ; and with the exception of the good Mr. Sinclair—whose timely assistance I had returned in the first days of my success, and from whom I received an occasional letter—I knew nothing of the existence of any one in my native town. Marcus, I knew had gone away about the time of my departure, and hearing nothing from him, or of him in all these years, I thought I had reason to believe that his last threatening words at our parting were meaningless ; or better still, that, in the possible growing manliness of his growing years, he had repented of them.

In my new life no one knew anything of my past. I never spoke of it, and no one questioned me in regard to it. Perhaps it was owing to my persistent silence in regard to all that concerned myself, that the delicacy—which is a part of the high-bred element that surrounded me—of those who knew me, prevented all questioning, and even the appearance of curiosity. It is true that I shrank from the discovery of the unjust treatment of myself in the past, as much as I shrank from the discovery of my unfortunate birth. Not that I was ashamed of this treatment—that was so undeserved—as I was ashamed of my birth,—which also was no fault of mine ; but that I dreaded any possible return of all

that I had suffered, in the discovery of the one, which might bring about the discovery of the other. And as with every year the probability of this discovery grew less, my desire to prevent it increased.

One afternoon we were looking, Mabel and I, at a choice collection of paintings, which had been for several days on special exhibition, when my attention was arrested by a hurried whisper from Mabel,—

“Nellie!”—I was always Nellie to her—“a man has been watching you for the last five minutes, and in a way that I think he must know you. I hope he does, for I never saw so handsome a man. Oh, I am sure he knows you! Look, Nellie, he is coming towards us!” And following her gaze of ecstatic admiration, my eyes looked upon the face of Marcus Pancho. Simultaneously with my look of astonishment, he approached me, and reaching out his hand, said in a low, musical voice—

“Ah, Ellinore, friend and comrade of my early days, I have found you at last! Nay, do not look so indignant, for I have come to ask your forgiveness for my boyish, bad treatment of you. The years since we parted have made a man of me, and while they have brought me real sorrow and regret for the pain I caused you, they have also taught me to appreciate a nature like yours. Forgive me, Ellinore, I implore you, and let us be friends!”

What was I to do? Moments like these are singularly embarrassing. One shrinks from being the occasion of a scene. Mabel and I were not alone. There were groups of others there, some of whom I knew, and they were already attracted by the handsome face and fascinating manner of Marcus. What if he had, indeed, repented of his bad treatment of me—as he declared he had, and as I had hoped, from the long period of repose he had permitted me, that he had done! There was an air of frankness and sincerity in his words and manner, that would have left no doubt in the mind of any one but me, of the genuineness of his good intentions. Or, what if he had not changed, and that it was still as he had declared to me—four years ago at our parting—it had always been; that he both loved and hated me—loved me because I was pleasing to him, hated me because I refused to be pleased by him. In any case, should I persist in my first impulse of indignation, and refuse the forgiveness he so earnestly and humbly demanded, would not the humiliation to him of this refusal, incite in him a new vindictiveness, and a new desire for revenge? For notwithstanding the apparent transformation, and my hope that he had changed, I had an instinctive mistrust of the man; and I could not forget the peculiar nature of his revenge in the past, nor the

fulness of the suffering it had brought to me. "Would it not be better," I thought, "to show him friendliness, so long as he seems to be a friend?"

But in such moments thought must be rapid, touching, as with a flash, all that I have expressed; and while one is thinking one thing, one is often saying and doing, from impulse or from habit, another. And while I was trying to decide in my mind what I should do, what was best to do, I had introduced Marcus and Mabel to each other; I had left the Art-room; I had walked up the Avenue arm and arm with Mabel; I was standing at the stately entrance of the home of her parents—and Marcus Pancho was still with us.

"Miss Ellinore always stays with me to dine, after our afternoon. Mamma wishes her to do so. You must come too, Mr. Pancho, this evening. I shall tell mamma that I have invited you, and she will be pleased, I am sure, to know one who has always known Miss Ellinore. Remember, we shall expect you;" she added, as Marcus parted from us.

Mabel had said this abruptly, and, as a result of my apparently restored amicableness towards him, I could not then express my disapproval of this unexpected courtesy on the part of Mabel, which I was certain was not wholly due to my supposed intimacy with Marcus, but largely to her own sing-

ular interest in him, whose fascination of face and of manner had already its effect upon her.

Marcus succeeded in pleasing, to an extraordinary degree, both Mr. and Mrs. Livingston; so that Mabel's invitation was followed by another from her mother, which was the beginning of a series of attentions that were received by the clever Marcus, it must be admitted, in the most admirable manner. His respect for the somewhat dogmatic opinions of Mr. Livingston, his deference for that which he pretended to consider the intellectual and moral sovereignty of the man, but which some others more correctly designated as individual aristocracy and individual monopoly; this respect and this deference, were most pleasing to Mr. Livingston. The courtesy of Marcus towards Mrs. Livingston was devotion. He made himself necessary to her, by creating from new services new demands; in short, he had, by his clever management, become an indispensable accessory to the home and the social life of Mr. and Mrs. Livingston. Above all, his manner to Mabel won the favor of the parents. In her presence he observed, to an extraordinary degree, that carefulness of decorum in his utterances and his movements, that is proper to observe in the presence of a maiden young in years and experience. To all appearances there was nothing in his conduct

either of familiarity or of coquetry. Towards me he maintained that frank but respectful cordiality that had characterized the first sudden announcement of himself at the Art-gallery; a cordiality which a long established friendship—as ours was supposed to be—would justify. He made no allusion to the past that was at all significant or embarrassing. He had no opportunity of seeing me alone at the Livingston's, and he did not imply, in any way, that he desired the opportunity—as he had never called upon me when I was at my own, and not Mabel's home. For the rest, it was understood that his stay in New York was limited. It was already toward the end of the season, and he had announced his intention of going to Europe at its close. The situation was more satisfactory to me than I could have thought it possible—considering our former hostile relations—to be; and notwithstanding a personal dislike of the man, that I could not conquer, and that I believed to conceal so well that Marcus could not suspect its existence, as he in no way betrayed that he did—notwithstanding this dislike, and an instinctive fear that never wholly left me, I persuaded myself to believe that since I had known him as a boy, there had been in him, as a man, a radical and a wholesome change. And nothing could excel the seeming delicacy and

thoughtfulness of his manner towards me in his efforts to bring about this persuasion.

This satisfactory routine of my life was unexpectedly brought to an end. The sudden departure of Mr. and Mrs. Livingston for a neighboring city, at the demand of a dying kinsman, and their prolonged absence, brought about, or precipitated, results that were as extraordinary in their arrangement as they were painfully disastrous in their effect. Mabel had never been left to the care of the housekeeper and servants. In leaving their home, her parents had always permitted her to accompany them. This time it was decided that she should remain with me; and that during the absence of Mr. and Mrs. Livingston, Mabel's home was to be my home, and I was expected to add to my own habitual care and solicitude of Mabel, that of both the parents. Since then I have many times recalled the fact—that I persuaded myself then to be a curious fancy—that when, as a parting word, Mrs. Livingston expressed her regret at leaving Mabel at home, the naturally pale face of Mabel flushed with a sudden emotion, and a curious flame, half of contempt, half of triumph, burned in the depths of her usually lustreless eyes.

It had been my habit, at the urgent request of Mrs. Livingston, every day, after the last recitation,

to accompany Mabel to her home before going to my own, that I might be sure of her safe return, and that I might inform myself of the arrangement, if any, that Mrs. Livingston had made for the rest of the afternoon, or for the evening, in which I was expected, with Mabel, to take part. During the absence of Mr. and Mrs. Livingston, I had as usual accompanied Mabel to her home before going to my own; returning, however, to dine with her, and to pass the night at her house. So that I was away from Mabel only about two hours of each day, during which time I supposed her quietly awaiting me at her home, as I always found her there to receive me.

A week passed without the occurrence of anything unusual. On Tuesday afternoon of the second week—at the close of which Mr. and Mrs. Livingston were expected to return—while I was busily occupied in my room—that was used as a sitting-room of my apartment—I was surprised when the servant announced that Mabel wished to see me.

“Nellie,” she said, “don’t send me away—let me stay with you; I know you like to be alone at this hour, but I will not disturb you. See how quiet I can be!” she added, seating herself upon an easy chair, and closing her eyes.

“Of course you may stay with me, dear, and you

do not disturb me in the least; besides, I have nothing important to do," I answered, crowding myself into the chair beside her, and putting my arms about her. Then noticing her flushed cheek and nervous manner, I added, "You might have come with me every day. You shall not be left alone again."

"I hope not:" she replied, with an intensity of tone that made me feel as if I had neglected her. Her manner, however, was more than ordinarily affectionate, and she assured me, with what seemed to me a singular earnestness of manner, of her strong attachment to me, and of her confidence in me and in my affection for her. Then, after sitting quite still for a few minutes, she said abruptly,—

"Nellie, if I were going away, going away never to return, I should only feel sad to leave you, and no one else—for my parents, I am sure, would be happier without me."

"Mabel!" I exclaimed, shocked at the bitterness of the feeling with which she regarded her parents. "You do not know what you are saying! You are not well—you do not look well, and I only wish your father and mother were here now! Oh, Mabel, how I wish you could understand your parents—how much they love you, how much they would be willing to do to make you happy!"

Mabel was about to reply, when hearing the door bell ring, and rapid foot steps ascending the stairs, we waited the announcement of whoever it might be; when there was a vigorous rap at my door, followed by the immediate opening of it, and, to my great astonishment, the entrance of Marcus Pancho unaccompanied by the servant.

I had not seen Marcus since the departure of Mr. and Mrs. Livingston. His sense of decorum had kept him—as I naturally supposed—from the home of Mabel during their absence; and I did not expect to see him till after their return. I had given Mary—my one servant, who did everything for me—the strictest orders never to permit any one to enter my apartment unannounced; and on seeing Marcus thus suddenly and unexpectedly before me, with a look upon his face that brought back all my dislike and mistrust of him, and seeing myself again subjected to an intrusion the like of which had been so odious to me in the old days, I had but one feeling—that of indignant resentment against the outrage I was no longer obliged to support; and without speaking to Marcus, but with an exclamation of disapproval, I was about to ring for Mary, in order to reprimand her disregard of my orders, when anticipating my movements towards the bell, he said, in a suave voice, and bowing politely,—

“Permit me, Ellinore !”

It was half past three—the clock had just struck the half hour—when Marcus thus politely offering his services to summon Mary, stood bowing, smiling, and triumphant before me. After that, what happened there and elsewhere, I can recount only as it was made known to me in the subsequent events that followed hours of an unconscious existence. What I next remember, and what I have had reason to remember all my life, is, that at eleven o’clock that night, I was aroused, as if from a deep sleep, by the sudden appearance of a bright light in my room, and of what seemed—in my frightened and bewildered condition—an apparition, but which was really Mr. Livingston.

“Pardon me, Miss Ellinore !” he said hurriedly and with some embarrassment, as he saw me suddenly rise up from the chair on which I had been sitting. “I did not expect to find you already here, as there was no light in your room, and the servant assured me that you had not returned ; so I entered without announcing myself, thinking to await your return. But I see you have been asleep, and I do not wonder that you are frightened at seeing me so unexpectedly and at this late hour. I can not understand why Mabel did not receive my telegram, informing her of our intended arrival to-night.”

"Telegram !" I echoed, still looking at him in a dazed way.

"Yes, I sent a telegram, which you did not get ; that accounts for your astonishment. Imagine Mrs. Livingston's and my surprise, to find no one at the railway station to meet us ; and arriving at the house to find that you and Mabel were not there to receive us ; and that our return was entirely unexpected. Mabel's maid informed us that her mistress had gone out in the afternoon, and that she had returned later, in great haste, with you and Mr. Pancho, for a dress and some other articles, that Mabel said were required for a dramatic entertainment that was to take place in the evening ; and that the carriage was not to be sent for her, as she would stay with you, at your apartment, to-night. But Mrs. Livingston insisted that I should come here and await your arrival, and take you both back to our house to enjoy the surprise of our return." Then glancing through a long vista of rooms, at the extreme end of which, through half drawn curtains, he caught the glimpse of the white drapery of a bed, he added, "But I see you have been prudent enough to come home early ; and as Mabel is asleep, I will only awaken her to kiss her, and to tell her that we will send for her in the morning."

With a violent effort I aroused myself as from the

influence of a horrible nightmare; but it seemed to me that I was still dreaming, when I uttered in a broken, bewildered way,—

“Mabel!—Mabel!—where is Mabel? I—I do not know what you mean, Mr. Livingston! I—I do not understand what you have been saying! Why have I been asleep? Why—why is it night? Why,—”

Mr. Livingston was beyond the reach of my voice. At the first mysterious words I had uttered, his face took an expression of terror; and before I had finished, he was hurrying wildly through the rooms to the bed whereon he had supposed Mabel to be asleep. Then, after a minute of frantic reaching after, and plaintive calling of “Mabel! Mabel!” with a loud cry he returned, and taking my arm in a cruel grasp, said in a hoarse voice,—

“Where is Mabel? Where is my daughter? What has happened?” Then as if seized with a sudden idea—“You have all deceived me! You have all lied to me! Mabel is ill—she is ill with some frightful disease! But you dare not keep the truth from me! Quick—tell me where you have hidden my daughter!”

The vehemence, the suffering of the man, had to a degree aroused me. I began to realize that I must answer something; and with this realization came my recollection of what had occurred that

afternoon until the moment I had ceased to remember anything.

“Oh yes, Mr. Livingston, I remember now ; Mabel was here this afternoon—here in this room. We were sitting together in this chair. I remember that Mabel was nervous and feverish, and that while we were talking, Marcus Pancho came in. I was angry that he came unannounced, and was going to ring the bell for Mary ; and—and—I do not remember anything else. It was afternoon then—and now it is night. I was going back with Mabel to her house—and you say that I went ; but I cannot remember going, and—I am still here, you see ; I do not remember to have seen Marcus Pancho leave this room—nor Mabel. And yet they must have gone away—for—for—they are not here. Mr. Livingston, I do not know what has happened to me ; but I think, that without knowing it, I must have slept ; for the sudden blaze of light, and the sight of you, terrified me.”

“There is some dreadful mystery about all this !” said Mr. Livingston, now white and trembling with terror and excitement. “Could you have been drugged, and Mabel and Marcus decoyed to some dreadful place, and Mabel’s maid bribed to deceive us by falsehoods ? No other servant saw you enter the house in the afternoon—you and Mabel, and Mr.

Pancho. But I have already lost too much time. The first thing to do is to send the detectives in search of Mabel and Marcus." And seizing his hat he was about to disappear, when turning suddenly, he exclaimed,—

"But your seryant, the one who came up with me to your room—she must know something that will enlighten us! Let us hear what she has to say!"

"Yes," I answered, still dreamily, "it is as you say; Mary must know something." (It did not seem to occur to me that I should have thought of that before.) "She must be in bed, but I will waken her." And as I was about to leave the room with this intention, the door, that had been slightly open, opened wide, and Mary herself entered, betraying the fact that she had been a silent and unnoticed witness of all that had occurred between Mr. Livingston and myself; for without waiting to be interviewed, and looking suspiciously at Mr. Livingston, she said, in a curiously defiant tone,—

"Ye needn't be thinkin' as ye'll hear anythin' from me! I knows nothin' what's not my business. I knows what Miss Illinore 'as told ye—'ow the young lady what's called Mabel was 'ere, and that a young gintleman was 'ere too. I niyer watches folks as goes hout and hin uv the 'ouse. I reckoned Miss Illinore was at the young lady's 'ouse, like

she was other nights. I didn't see her comin' back. It was as 'ow I told ye, sir—there was no light in her room, and I didn't know she was 'ere. That's hall I knows."

While Mary was speaking, a dreadful suspicion had rapidly taken possession of me, that—while I sought for reasons to prove the folly of conceiving it—an instinctive wisdom forced me to believe true. It was a terrible fear that had aroused me, but I was wide awake now, and I was fully impressed with the necessity of immediate action. And seizing Mr. Livingston by the arm—while he was vainly trying to extract some definite information from Mary, and pointing to the door, I cried in a strangely excited and imperious tone,—

"Go! Mr. Livingston—go at once, and set the detectives to work! It may be even now too late! Do not waste time to return to me till something definite has been learned; for I declare to you that I have told you already all I know, and that I do not know, more than you, where Mabel is; but I am sure that the only way to know, is to find Marcus Pancho!"

The sudden earnestness of my words and manner, joined to his own conclusion that something must be done at once, precipitated Mr. Livingston's exit without another word. As soon as we were

alone, Mary locked the door, and coming close to me, with a mingled expression of curiosity, admiration, and amazement upon her face, she said,—

“Miss Illinore, would ye be afther a lavin’ me say a bit o’ me mind?”

I was only too anxious to encourage any familiarity, or even impertinence on the part of Mary, that might induce her to confide to me all that I suspected she knew of the mysterious affair—all that she had adroitly refused to tell Mr. Livingston—and I graciously gave her the required permission, whereupon she proceeded, in a cautious tone, to give me “a bit o’ her mind.”

“Well, Miss, ye’s into hit, and ’ow’s ye to get hout—that’s what I’d like to know?”

Then seeing that I looked inquiringly at her, she continued,—

“Hit’s ye that would be makin’ a cliver acthress, Miss Illinore—what wid yer pretendin’ to be aslape, and yer starin’ at the ould gintleman kind o’ dazed like, while he was a-grabbin’ ye, and yer not spakin’, as hif ye was dumb, and then hall at once to waken hup, as hif ye ’ad just found hout what ’ad ’appened, and yer clutchin’ o’ the ould gintleman, and yer pintin’ to the door, and yer spakin’ has they spakes at the thaietre—‘Go! go Misther Livingston!’ I tells ye, Miss, hit was has cliver a bit o’ playin’ has iver ye sees hon the stage.”

Mary, although of Irish parentage, had been born and brought up in England; so that her language was a curious mixture of Irish brogue and execrable English; and this peculiarity of speech, accompanied, as it was, by a grotesque imitation of every gesture and expression described by her, was so ludicrous, that had I not been so gravely concerned, it would have afforded me immense enjoyment; as it was, I said simply,—

“What do you mean Mary?”

“Oh, Miss Illinore! (this time with an air of reproach,) “do ye thinks has I wasn’t a-knowin’ the manin’ huv it hall—has ’ow ye was a-hactin’ to keep the ould gintleman ’ere until the young couple, what was eloped, ’ad got far enough hoff, and then when ye was a-knowin’ ye couldn’t keep him hany longer, ye sent him afther the p’lice?”

A sickening sensation of weakness was taking possession of me; but feeling the necessity of knowing all that Mary could tell me, there was, in the excitement of my curiosity, a counteracting influence that sustained me. “Mary,” I said, insinuatingly, “do you really know everything?”

“Oh yes, Miss, I knows as ’ow ye ’as ’elped Miss Mabel and the ’andsome young man to elope! But ye ’as been good to me, and hit’s not the likes o’ Mary Sullivan that will tell hon ye.”

“Mary,” I said, coaxingly, “I want you to tell me everything you saw and heard yesterday afternoon.”

“Well, Miss, ye knows what strict horders ye gives me not to let hany one go hup to ye widout a-tellin’ ye; and ye see when the young man comes yesterday, he wasn’t a-mindin’ me, but goes straight hup to yer room, a-sayin’ that ye was expectin’ ’im. I was thinkin’ he might be a thief; so when yer door was shut, I went hup the stairs to watch. And just has I gets hup, I ’eard a big sound, so sud-like, hit took me hoff my feet; and as hit was a comin’ from yer room, I was frightened; and ye knows as ’ow I opens the door, and was a-lookin’ hin, when the ’ansome young man steps hup to me a-smilin’, and a-sayin’,—”

““Oh, we didn’t ring for ye, my good girl! We was honly experimentin’ wid this new gong that I brought for Miss Illinore.’”

“And ye knows, Miss, as ’ow I said,” ‘indade and I don’t want to be took hoff my feet, ivery time that Miss Illinore wants me, by a sharp soundin’ thing like that!’ “And, Miss, ye was a-starin’ at the young man as hif ye wasn’t a-liken hit aither. Well, hit wasn’t long afther that till I sees ye and the young lady, and the ’ansome man, a-comin’ down the stairs—where I was a-workin’ around—

and go hout together. And ye knows as 'ow I 'ad just finished a puttin' yer room to rights, when ye all comes back again—and a boy along wid ye, a carrying a valise; and 'ow the 'ansome man tells me to fetch hup some hice water. And then Miss, the young lady wasn't careful. She's one o' them folks what thinks a servant his nobody; for when I brings the water hup, she went hon a talkin,'—

“‘Oh Nellie, 'ow good ye are! And to think hit, is ye what 'as planned heverything, widout me knowin' hit! Nellie dear, honly try and keep mamma and papa has long has ye can, from findin' it hout, and give us time to get away. Ye are cliver enough to do hit, I knows; and, Nellie, when we are settled, ye must come and live wid us—Marcus and me.’

“That was what the young lady said, Miss Illinore, and then I was too far hout huv the room to 'ear the rest; but I 'ad 'eard enough to know that Miss Mabel was a-goin' to elope with the 'ansome man, and that ye was a—helpin' thim, and I says to meself: ‘The young couple 'as the right huv hit, seein' hit's Miss Illinore what's a-helpin' thim!’ After that I was cur'ous to know the hend, so I waited around till I sees the carriage come, and ye hall got hin, and the valise wid ye, and went riden' hoff together. I went hout meself afther that—has hit was me evenin' hout—and

seein' hit was late when I comes back, and 'ow hit was dark hin yer rooms, I thought ye 'ad gone to bed; and knowin' what 'ad 'appened, I wasn't a-goin' to let the ould gintleman go hup to yer room; so I tells 'im ye was hout. But he said he was a-knowin' hit, and that he was a-goin' to wait for ye. Then I comes hup wid 'im, and indade, Miss, hit was meself that was taken a-back, to find yer door unlocked, and yerself as pretendin' to be aslape hon the chair; so I says to meself, 'I'll be afther a lavin' the door a bit hopen' to see what hit's hall about.' And hit wasn't long afore I was a thinkin— 'Miss Illinore is a playin' to keep the ould gintleman has long has she can, from goin' afther the young couple what 'as eloped. I was kind o' frightened when the ould gintleman brought me hin; but he didn't get hanything hout huv me, Miss Illinore, did he? "

Mary had been so faithful to me; above all, she had absolute faith in my uprightness of character, and in the prudence of my actions—that had been open as the day,—and I could not bear the thought that she, servant though she was, should believe me capable of a deception so gross, so odious in its nature as that in which it would seem to her I had taken so large a part. But a burning fever was consuming me; my head was aching, horribly ach-

ing, in every nerve; and added to this physical pain, was the feeling of hopelessness at the thought of trying to combat the evidence that would be used with fatal force against me; so that it was not with the energy that might have impressed one with its truth, that I attempted to explain the situation to Mary.

“Mary,” I said, “you have heard of people walking in their sleep, and of their saying and doing things they could not remember, when awake, of having done and said?” (Mary promptly replied that she had.) “Well,” I continued, “such people can be put to sleep at any time, by those who know how to do it; and while they are asleep, their thoughts and their actions are under the control of another, or others, and they are neither conscious nor responsible for what they say or do, nor have they any recollection of it afterwards, when awake. Mary, I am like this—that is, I am one of those people who walk, and talk, and act, in their sleep; and Marcus Pancho—him whom you know as the ‘handsome man’—is the only one that knew this unfortunate fact. I believed myself cured of the dangerous malady; but, alas, I know now that I am still its victim. Marcus Pancho is my deadly enemy; and, Mary, this is what happened to me, without my knowing it, yesterday afternoon—I was

put to sleep. Marcus Pancho put me to sleep by the sudden striking of a gong—which he had concealed from me, but which he told you he had brought for me, and which you see he has not left behind him to betray him; and while I was unconscious, I must have said and done all that he wished me to say and do. I was in this sleep—this curious, this dreadful sleep—from the time of the striking of the gong, until Mr. Livingston came, when the sudden blaze of light aroused me. This is why, Mary, I wished you to tell me all, precisely as it occurred yesterday afternoon; for you understand that I myself have no recollection of anything.”

Mary evidently did not “understand” although I had tried to give the explanation in as simple a manner as possible—for she regarded me with an unmistakable air of disappointment and reproach. Then she said, with that blandness of tongue, and that fineness of dissimulation peculiar to the Irish, that carries with the severest significance an emollient,—

“And don’t ye be afther a tellin’ to anither a story like that, me swate lady! And shure, that don’t say ye needs tell the truth, aither—as ’ow ye ’as ’elped the young folks to elope. Who’s a-knowin’ hit, for shure, but yerself and me? And his hit me what ’as told the ould gintleman what I knows?

No ; nor his hit the likes o' me that will tell hon ye ! And, Miss Illinore, hif I was ye, what 'as played so foine, I would'nt be a weakenin' now."

The faithful, good-hearted girl, had evidently enjoyed immensely the whole of the strange and fatal occurrence that she was pleased to designate as my "playin." The moral impropriety of the act, and its results upon others, did not seem to occur to her ; consequently, she did not like my "weakenin" —for so she regarded my explanation, and I had no longer the force to reason with her ; neither had I the strength to go to the Livingston's, as I had intended to do, even at that late hour ; for to the pain of my fevered brow was added a sudden dizziness, and my head fell heavily to the pillow of the sofa upon which I was seated. Mary, thinking that I simply wished to rest, went softly out of the room, and I was left alone with the appalling thoughts that crowded upon me.

Certainly I had been terribly and fatally mistaken in believing that Marcus had grown either indifferent or friendly in his heart to me. On the contrary, his desire to torture me, and his fitness to do it, had increased : for I was again the victim of his revenge —a revenge that was more fiendish in its conception, and more disastrous in its effects than any of which I had been, in the past, the victim. And he had

chosen Mabel, because she was dear to me, to be the instrument of his revenge. This thought was more distressing to me than the thought of any misfortune to myself. What had been the extent of his wrong to her, I could not of course determine; but whatever he had done had not been, I was sure of that, half done. Without doubt Marcus and Mabel had gone away together. He must have succeeded in gaining her devotion to himself to a remarkable degree; for—from what Mary had related to me—it was evident that she had fled with him gladly, and of her own will. But I could not believe that she had knowingly taken part in the diabolical plot that Marcus had arranged in order to thoroughly implicate me, and to bring about my ruin. Mabel had been so loving, so clinging on that afternoon. Alas! I understood now why she had been so.

What was I to do? The very nature of Marcus' revenge—as he had foreseen—had made me helpless. How was I to give a satisfactory explanation to others, of a condition whose phenomena I could not satisfactorily explain to myself? Mary, my faithful servant, who had always loved me, and implicitly trusted me, had not believed the truth as I believed it; and I could not hope that others would believe it. Mr. Livingston had concluded that I had been drugged. What if I also should pretend to a

belief in that conclusion, and thus escape all responsibility and all blame? Such an ignoble method was unworthy of me, I knew that, and that I could never agree to protect myself by falsehood; besides, it was a falsehood that was liable at any moment to be brought to light by the revelations—yet unknown to me—of others. No! Whatever might be the result, I determined to tell the truth; and having thus determined, I was ready to go to the home of Mabel. It was not yet five o'clock; but while I had been thinking, I had been resting; and after calling Mary, and bidding her inform Mr. Livingston—should he come for me—that I had gone to his house, with a heavy heart I went out into the morning air.

CHAPTER VI.

Mr. Livingston had doubtless given certain orders in regard to me, for I was shown at once to his study to await his return; the housekeeper informing me that Mrs. Livingston was completely prostrated, and unable to see me. She, the housekeeper, eyed me curiously as she said this; the servant who opened the door had also given me a curious glance; and Rosa, Mabel's maid—who with tears swollen eyelids passed me in the hall—had looked at me in the same strange manner. Did they pity me—as a victim of the mystery that enveloped the household, or did they suspect me—as an accomplice of it? Through the half open door of the study came the sounds of low whispering, and of that solemn confusion that denotes the presence of death in a household, or of a calamity. Soon there were sounds of other voices and footsteps, and Mr. Livingston entered, accompanied by a man who I knew—before he was designated to me as such—was a detective. Mr. Livingston's face was pale and haggard; traces of the last hours of terrible anxiety had made it an older one. He did not seem to heed my eager, tearful questioning, but said at once,—

“We have not been able to find the slightest trace of either my daughter or Mr. Pancho.” Then looking at me keenly, he added, “We called for you, Miss Ellinore, before coming here; and we were informed that other occupants of the house in which you have your apartment, saw you go out and come in several times yesterday afternoon, accompanied by a young man, and a young lady whom they recognized as my daughter; the last time, however, you were seen to enter the house with the young man, alone, who went away some time after without you. Where was Mabel during this your last interview with Marcus? Where was the ‘dramatic entertainment’ you expected to attend last night, and for which—as Mabel assured her maid—the dresses and the jewelry we find missing, were required? You came with Mabel here, and waited with Mr. Pancho in the reception-room until she had procured what she required from her wardrobe. Another fact we have learned, is, that the telegram I sent Mabel was not only delivered at this house, but that it was received at the door by a young lady whom, by the description, I know to have been my daughter. Miss Ellinore, I admit that your situation, at present, is not an agreeable one, and I am not astonished that you were frightened last night at the contemplation of it; however, we expect you

to give us a thoroughly satisfactory explanation of the facts as you must know them, and of all that occurred during the absence of Mrs. Livingston and and myself, until the moment you were—drugged.”

The tones of Mr. Livingston’s voice—which were singularly hard—and his manner of emphasizing certain words, were ominous. I knew that he no longer believed that I had been drugged; and that he had in his mind a suspicion of what I felt to be the truth—that Mabel had fled with Marcus. I was sure, too, that in the household of Mr. Livingston I was a suspected person; and I did not feel that I had the courage to speak at all, much less to make the curious statement I was about to make, and which I knew must be believed entirely, in order to exonerate me, if believed at all, or discarded as an invention of my own. Besides, I could not know what might yet be revealed to make my story seem still more improbable; for had not Mr. Livingston made known to me a new fact—that when I returned the last time, while Mary was absent, to my apartment, I had returned alone with Marcus? Mr. Livingston had said he expected a “thoroughly satisfactory explanation,” but I knew that he demanded it—and that explanation I should not be able to give. So that it was with a sickening sense of failure, that I said,—

“Mr. Livingston, I told you the truth, as I know it, last night; that Mabel came to my room yesterday afternoon, and that soon after Marcus Pancho came too; that from that time until I saw you, I have no recollection of anything. I know nothing of the telegram that you say was received; I know nothing of the ‘dramatic entertainment’ you speak of; I remember nothing of having been to your house with Mabel and Marcus—I do not remember to have left my room at all. Believe me, Mr. Livingston, I am a most unfortunate girl. I am a hypnotic-somnambulist; and if I have been a party to all that you and others say I have been, it was while I was in an unconscious condition—it was while I was asleep. Do not be angry, Mr. Livingston, do not, at least, express your opinion until I have told you some facts of the past of my life that you do not know;” I made this last appeal to Mr. Livingston, because, in his amazement and indignation at the startling announcement I had made, he had sprung to his feet, and with a violent exclamation was about to express his feelings, when to my appeal the detective—with a significant look at Mr. Livingston—added,—

“The young lady is right. We will hear all that she has to tell us, before we shall presume to offer an opinion.”

There was something in the detective's manner of speaking, something in the expression of his face, that was meant to be disagreeably significant for me; and this impression, added to the heavy forboding of the hopelessness of my situation, weighed like an incubus upon me while I told the story of my life from my earliest remembrance of it—omitting only the fact that I had never known a father—until the present time. I also acknowledged my error in permitting myself to be deceived by the apparent happy change in Marcus, thus making myself responsible for his having been received into the home of Mabel. Finally, I concluded by expressing my absolute belief that Marcus had succeeded—without my suspecting it, any more than her parents—in gaining the affection of Mabel; and that after persuading her to flee with him, he had produced upon me a somnambulistic—or hypnotic—condition, in order that I might, for the time, be subject to his will; and by making me—in the presence of unsuspecting witnesses—an unconscious assistant in the arrangements for his flight with Mabel, cause me, without my knowing it, to implicate myself with his wrong doing, to a degree that would insure my utter inability to exonerate myself in the face of the fatal evidence that would be used against me, and that would insure also the complete

ruin of my present repose and success; thus procuring for himself a revenge worthy of his supreme wickedness and his supreme vindictiveness.

All through my recital the detective had never ceased to regard me; and with every advance in my story, the curious fixedness of his regard took an expression of increasing admiration—an admiration that terrified me; and when I had ceased to speak, he waited a moment, glancing at Mr. Livingston; and seeing that gentleman had not yet sufficient command of himself for utterance, he said—with the air of one who had an opinion, the truth of which he has not the slightest doubt,—

“You are very clever, Miss. I have seen many clever ones, but never one so finely clever as you. What a capital story you have told, to be sure! With what apparent accuracy you have expressed the smallest detail! There is nothing, Miss, I assure you, in the arrangement of your little romance, that would at all lead one to doubt its truth—except,” he added after an ominous pause—“its utter improbability.”

His words had the effect of an actual blow upon me; and sick with dread I turned towards Mr. Livingston, who feeling the necessity of saying something, came towards me with all the fury of a man who believes himself to have been first thoroughly

duped, and then outraged to an extraordinary degree, and he thundered, rather than exclaimed,—

“You vile creature! You bad offspring of a bad mother! You have confessed, yourself, to have done wrong in permitting a man that you hated, and whose character was such that you dreaded its evil effects upon your own life, to enter the home that has protected you; to possess himself of our affections; to delude our daughter, to perhaps ruin her, and to disgrace the name of Livingston. And yet you pretend to know nothing of an intimacy which I am convinced could not have begun nor progressed without your knowledge, and which there is proof that you not only approved of, but that you were the abettor, and perhaps the instigator of their disgraceful flight. For do not think that I believe your cunningly devised story of having talked, and walked, and acted in your sleep!” Then looking at me a moment with a glance of supreme contempt, he added,—“The admirable manner you rehearsed your part last night, when I surprised you by my unexpected appearance, and the cleverness of your recital just now, convince me that you will be able to achieve a brilliant success in one other natural perfection, besides badness—in the perfection of your dramatic talent. But I would advise you to go elsewhere—out of New York,

Miss Ellinore; for your *acting* henceforth here will produce upon those who know you but one effect—that of intense disgust.”

“Oh, Mr. Livingston!” I cried, distractedly, “I declare by all that is sacred, that I have told you what I believe to be the truth! I have been as greatly deceived as you, I have been as greatly wronged as you! Find Mabel, Mr. Livingston, only find Mabel! She has been persuaded by Marcus to leave her home; but she loved me, she was loving me to the last—I remember that! She would not permit me to be so cruelly wronged by her wrong doing! She would not have me looked upon as guilty, when I am wholly innocent! She will write to you—she must write to you! Her letter will explain everything; wait for that letter, Mr. Livingston, wait for it, I implore you!”

An interruption prevented his reply; and as if to grant my request of him in a horribly sinister and fateful way, a servant entered, followed by a boy with a letter in his hand, which he insisted upon giving himself to Mr. Livingston.

“Thank ’ee sir!” said the urchin, taking the dollar that Mr. Livingston gave him, and going towards the door.

“Hold!” exclaimed the detective; “We may have need of you, after the gentleman reads the letter!”

The boy came back with a grin, and the air of one who knows himself master of the situation.

"No sir 'ee! I can't wait till you read that letter—it's too long. Wot I knows, I kin tell you now—that's if you want ter know," said the boy, with another grin.

"Who gave you this letter my lad?" asked Mr. Livingston impatiently, and trembling with agitation, as he took the letter from the envelope.

"Oh, you want ter know who guv me that letter, does you? Wal, wot's wuth knowin 's wuth payin' fur."

The second dollar was promptly given.

"Wal, you see, I wuz jes' turnin' the corner o' Park Avenoo, when—"

"Was it last night or this morning?" interrupted Mr. Livingston.

"I wuz jes turnin' the corner o' Park Avenoo," continued the boy, paying no respect to the interruption, "when a fine kerrige druv up, an' a mighty good lookin' gent put's his head out o' the winder, an' sez he—"

"Was there a young lady in the carriage with the gentleman?" Again interrupted Mr. Livingston; and again the boy went on heedless of the interruption.

"An' sez he,— 'Cum 'ere you brat,'—an' I goes."

Sez he, 'You see this 'ere letter, an' you see the address uv the house where it's to go to; wal, you take this letter, to that house, an' guv it to Mister Livin'ston. Don't guv it to any one else, or you'll not git payed fur it.' That's why I didn't guv it to any one else."

"Was there a young lady in the carriage, and when was the letter given to you?" repeated Mr. Livingston sternly.

"That's wot I won't tell yer honor—not till you give me another shiner." And the young scamp looked admiringly at the "shiners" he had already in his posession.

"You young rascal!" shouted the detective, displaying at the same time the insignia of his profession. "Do you see who I am; I could have made you tell all you know, without paying you anything!"

"No—you—couldn't;" drawled the imp, not in the least intimidated. "It wouldn't hev bin the truth, any how."

Mr. Livingston had already given the required dollar, and the small tormentor, turning towards him, continued,—

"Wal, you wantter know if there wuz a young lady in the kerrige. Wal, there wuz—a young lady dressed in blue; I allus pays perticlar 'tension to—"

"Well, well, what else?" cried Mr. Livingston, burning with impatience to read the letter, but desiring to know first all that the boy had to tell. "Tell me, quickly, all you know."

"Wal, you axed me when the letter wuz guv to me. Wal, it wuz guv to me this mornin'; an' then—the kerrige druv off; an' then—an' then—wal, I hain't nothin' more to tell yer honor." And the rapacious youngster looked, this time sadly, at the wealth of "shiners" that lay in his hand.

The boy's prompt dismissal was accelerated by a movement of the detective's boot, while Mr. Livingston proceeded in silence to read the letter, his face growing deadly pale, and a terrible indignation convulsing every feature. When he had finished the reading he turned to the detective, and in a hard, cold tone of voice, that could not, however, conceal the intense suffering of the man, he said,—

"It will not be necessary to search any longer for my daughter. This letter explains everything—*everything*," he repeated, looking menacingly at me. Then again to the detective—"Go, at once, and employ every means to stop all efforts to find my daughter, and, as much as you can, to stop all interest, all curiosity in regard to her. Say that I know where she is, and that I am perfectly satisfied to permit her to remain where she is."

This was all. The detective's face mutely asked for more information, and in going out he looked regretfully at me, with the thought, no doubt, that he had been unexpectedly deprived of the enjoyment of making startling discoveries in the development of the depravity that had been revealed—as he believed—in my explanation, which he had designated as “a capital story.” But Mr. Livingston's inexorable pride was well known, and his manner was not to be misunderstood. Nothing more was to be done in the affair, and nothing more, to him, spoken of it. Whatever had happened, he wished the world to believe, or to appear to him to believe, that nothing had happened. He wished them to imply from his own actions and appearance, that, as he considered it, nothing had happened. Above all, his reserve would admit of no questioning; and as the detective thus understood it, so Mr. Livingston meant that henceforth everybody should understand it.

As soon as we were alone, Mr. Livingston came towards me, and thrusting the letter into my grasp with one hand, and with the other upraised in a threatening manner, he exclaimed with a vehemence that appalled me,—

“Read that, and curses be upon you! You, the false woman who stole into our home that you might

darken it forever, and into our hearts that you might make them joyless forever! You, the false teacher who fostered in the mind of your pupil an unnatural mistrust of her parents, while you taught her how to deceive us into believing the contrary! You, who had the appearance of an angel of truth that was leading our child to a happier living, while you were in secret assuring her ruin! You, who have deceived Mabel to the last, by a cunning hypocrisy, and who still hoped to deceive her parents by the fabrication of a tale worthy of your cleverness and your badness! And you have done all this in the desire and the expectation of being received yourself into the home from which you have succeeded in banishing the daughter; to receive permanently for yourself the benefits that have been so largely lavished upon you, and from which you have effectually excluded the daughter! This, your ambition and your hope, which is perfectly clear to me, has occurred, at the latest hour, in a vague way, even to the weak mind of your victim. It was agreed, she says, that you were to tell us, after a time, the truth—that is, the truth of your part in the shameful affair; but fearing that remorse for what you have done, and your pity for our loneliness, and your desire to console us, might induce you to remain with us—which we certainly would

have wished had you proved all that we believed you to be—to prevent this, she herself concluded to tell the truth; and she gives as her reason for betraying you, her extravagant fondness for you, and her fear of losing you: while the real reason—which is that she has an instinctive warning of your falseness, and of your evil design—she does not yet comprehend. How little her childish mind could conceive of a method so uniquely clever as that with which you hoped to preserve not only our esteem and affection, but to merit also our pity, as a victim, with us, of our misfortune! Mabel still blindly trusts that you will go to her, to stay with her in her fortune or misfortune—as you made her believe. But, although henceforth I shall have no daughter, she shall know this, as the world shall know it: that I have respected the last desire expressed in her letter—that I have ‘recompensed you according to your worth;’ that the good fortune you expected to reap from your vile success, has proved your misfortune; that as you, despised by me, interdicted by me, are forbidden to enter my house or my presence, so you will be despised by others who esteemed you, so you will be suspected by others who trusted in you, so you will be abandoned by those who patronized you. The ruin you have brought upon others, shall fall also upon yourself.”

I had taken Mabel's letter—the letter, alas, that I had prayed for in the belief that it would prove my innocence, and exonerate me from all blame—and when Mr. Livingston had ceased to utter the words and maledictions that turned my heart to stone, I read, as well as I was able then to read it, the last proof required in the fatal circumstances that were destined to condemn me.

“MY DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER:—I address you thus, probably for the last time. I have always felt that the enjoyments and the privileges I have shared with you, as your daughter, were lavished upon me more in a spirit of pride than of affection. Lately I have had more reason than ever to believe this, and I am certain the same pride will never permit you either to pardon me, or to make the slightest attempt—once you know the truth—to induce me to return; and the truth is, that I am not the wife of Marcus Pancho, although I have already lived with him as his wife. You will say that this sin—this shame for me, this disgrace for you—was unnecessary; that as you knew Marcus, you admired him, and would have consented to our marriage. Alas! Marcus can not marry me. He is bound by an oath he can not break, either to marry another, or not to marry at all. Well, it is only the

old story—Marcus loves me, and I can not give him up. I will go with him wherever he goes. I never was happy until I knew he loved me. No one ever loved me as he loves me. But even were he to love me less than he now loves me, I would still rather go with him, his friend, his slave, to be something to him, anything to him, rather than lose the enjoyment I have now with him—rather than to be again the lonely and discontented girl, to be pitied by you and others, that I have always been.

You will be happier, once you are rid of me entirely through no fault of yours. I should always be a source of embarrassment and of humiliation to you; and no discipline, no education, could ever have justified your introducing me, with pride, as your daughter—and the coming season you would have been forced to introduce me.

I have wondered why Marcus loves me—I who am so unlovable, and who have been so little loved by others. I believe, now, it is because I am so faithful to him, because I love him so. *Nellie loves me too*—and she is beautiful, like Marcus. Nellie loved me at first because she pitied me. I know that now—now that I know I *owe Nellie everything*. She will understand what I mean by *everything*. It was she who planned all that occurred for Marcus and me—even our first apparently accidental meet-

ing in the Art-rooms. She knew all about our secret meetings, every afternoon during your absence. But I never suspected her of knowing anything; Marcus did not wish me to know the truth—not yet. We, Marcus and I, had made our plans for a later day; but your telegram, announcing your unexpected return, precipitated our movements. I was so sorry to leave Nellie, so sorry to grieve her, as I thought, by going away with Marcus. I had gone to her room, I was trying to give her, without her suspecting it, a last goodby, when Marcus came in. It was only then that I learned that Nellie knew all. I was so astonished, and so glad; but we had no time to talk, Nellie and I—Marcus did not wish us to lose a moment, he was in such haste to get away. But it was Nellie that arranged everything—as Marcus suggested—and that did everything. It was agreed that she should keep from you, so long as she could, the fact of our flight; but in the end she was to tell you all about it, and that she had given our intimacy and our flight, her approval and her assistance

You would never believe how *much* Nellie thought of *my* happiness, and how *little* she thought of *her own*, in doing all that she did for Marcus and me; but now that I know it, and the more I think of it, the greater is my desire that she keep

her promise—made at our parting—to come to us, wherever we might be, to live with us, always—with Marcus and me. And it is the fear, suddenly grown insupportable, that *Nellie may not keep her promise*; that in her attachment to you, as well as to me, and in her pity for your loneliness, and in her remorse for having been the cause of it, she will even persuade herself that her duty is to remain with you; the fear of all this—that would prevent her from making a frank statement to you of the truth—has impelled me to inform you of the facts of the case. You will know that Nellie is one with us; you will be indignant towards her, as you are towards us; you will banish her from your house, as we are banished. And to whom will she go, but to us, who know her *true worth*, and who are one in our desire to *recompense her according to that worth*.

Goodby, father and mother. I shall not be far from you when you will receive this letter; but were I still nearer, I should know then, as I know now, that we are parted forever; that nothing could change your determination never to see me again, any more than anything could change my determination to go with Marcus."

This letter was both a revelation and a mystery

to me. The horrible frankness with which Mabel accused her parents of lack of affection for herself, and her belief in their indifference to her fate—which Mr. Livingston charged to my influence—were, plainly enough to me, the result of Marcus' subtle and wicked persuasions. It was also evident to me, that the manner in which she expressed that which seemed to Mr. Livingston her extraordinary affection for me, and gratitude to me, had been suggested by Marcus and designed by him, for the purpose of conveying to others the indisputable evidence of the guilt I denied, and to reveal at the same time to me, individually, the whole diabolical plan of his revenge. But this was not all. There was an adroit frankness in the statements of what she must know to be false, and in the underlining of certain words, and in the manner of expression, that was meant to convey one meaning to me, and another to others, that convinced me that Mabel had written the letter with an individual purpose, and an individual satisfaction. It was as though she had suddenly discovered that I was her enemy, and that it was necessary to hate me; and that to the revenge of Marcus was added also the revenge of Mabel. She had loved me and believed in me, until the coming of Marcus that afternoon. Could it be possible that she believed

true all that she had written in that letter, and that it was during my unconscious condition that Marcus had persuaded her to believe it? But there was something else implied in the letter, that I could not understand; some accusation of a horrible nature in regard to me, by which Marcus had succeeded in changing suddenly her faith in me, and her affection for me, into mistrust and hate.

All this I comprehended and rapidly reflected upon, in the reading and re-reading of the letter, during which Mr. Livingston maintained a stern silence. When I attempted to speak, he refused to listen. I begged to see Mrs. Livingston, but I was not permitted to do so; and when I left the house, it was with the understanding that I should not enter it again.

CHAPTER VII.

It was true, as Mabel had written, that the inflexible pride of her parents would not permit them to receive her in the future as their daughter, or to publicly recognize her existence. The disgrace was of too shameful a character to admit of an open reconciliation. But she deeply outraged her parents when she imputed to them a want of natural affection. They had, it is true, been disappointed in the singularly unlovable disposition of their daughter; but her very weakness, and the morbid sensitiveness of her nature, had deepened their affection for her, and had added an immense pity for her unhappy temperament. But the shameful ingratitude expressed in her letter, the absence of any proof of her appreciation of, or even a belief in their affection for her; the dreadful suggestion that they would look upon her desertion of them and her home with a sense of relief; her own complete indifference to the disgrace and immorality of her conduct—all this, so outraged the feelings of the agonized father and mother, and, in furnishing them with what they believed to be the unmistakable proof of a most unnatural ingratitude and bad heartedness,

effectually deprived the unfortunate girl of what would have been—had she shown a spirit of contrition—that still loving, ever watchful, ever anxious solicitude, that, although secret and silent, would have followed her throughout her erring and inevitable suffering pathway. But henceforth her name was a forbidden one in the household; and, so far as the world could judge, it was worse than if she had died—it was as though she had never existed.

I was far from believing Mabel the unfeeling and depraved girl her parents felt themselves justified—by her letter—in believing. Without doubt she was madly infatuated with Marcus. His beauty of face and of person had completely fascinated her. Above all, his caressing manner, the tenderness he knew so well to dissemble, had completed his influence upon her; he had deceived her from the first. He was charming for a purpose, he was tender for a purpose. He had been quick to note the weakness of her character, and her admiration of him, and he had taken advantage of both. He had perceived her erroneous ideas in regard to her parents, and had encouraged them by creating more. Finally, after having attained a wished for degree of success—while still permitting Mabel to love me; to insure another degree of success, he induced her to regard me as her enemy. The whole was a fiend-

ish plan to bring about my ruin ; and Mabel was simply the means used to assure that ruin—a means that he would discard, once he was satisfied it could no longer be of use to him. I was certain that he had neither the desire nor the intention to marry her ; and that his story of being bound to another, was an invention of his. The unfortunate Mabel was ready to believe anything, and to excuse everything. But I was sure that the time would come when Marcus would undeceive her—horribly undeceive her ; and my heart was sick with the thought of what her future might be. I believed then, I believe now, that she was more sinned against than sinning ; that she was more to be pitied than condemned ; and my greatest desire was to find her, and convince her of her peril, and, through her repentance, reconcile her to her parents and vindicate myself. But, although I followed, with the same enthusiasm, every one of the numberless traces designated, each had the same ending in failure and disappointment. I saw no sign of either Mabel or Marcus, and heard no word of them.

It was as I feared it would be—I could not convince any one of the truth, as I believed it to be. Belief in the power to produce upon certain individuals a hypnotic sleep—or a state of artificial somnambulism—was at that time entertained only by

comparatively few. Men of science had not yet given to the general public the startling results of their experiments. As Mr. Livingston had considered my statement—"worthy of my dramatic talent;" as the detective had admired the cleverness of its conception; as Mary, my faithful servant, had come to believe that I was the victim of an hallucination; as these three had received it—so others received it.

My position was more than embarrassing—it was distressing. The wealth and influence of Mr. Livingston had kept all mention of the unfortunate affair from the journals; but the social world of which the Livingstons were a distinguished part, talked freely and excitedly about it. The entire history of my past life, the prejudices against me, the opprobrium of my birth, all the humiliating experiences of the past, everything that had occurred, and far more than had occurred, was talked about, and commented upon; and I was more than mildly denounced—I was discarded.

Nothing was more difficult for me than to find a friend—for me, who had a short time before rejoiced in the possession of so many and such admiring friends. They were a few who pitied me, who believed that in some mysterious way I had been implicated against my will; but they were

sorry I had invented an improbable story, instead of courageously confessing the truth; and they had not the courage to express, in the faces of the many who condemned me, their pity and this belief.

There was then but one thing to do; and, after all my painful experience, it was the one thing I wished to do—to leave New York; to quit the City that no longer gave me the favor and the affection it had once lavished upon me. I could no longer be useful there; I was no longer beloved, and I was no longer happy. I was done with the East, as it was done with me. And where else should I go, where else would any one, in a similar situation, go—but to the West? To the wide-spreading, far-reaching, always inviting West. To the land of fair skies and fresh breezes; of royal mountains and majestic rivers; of graceful prairies and flowering canyons; of gay young cities and enchanting solitudes. To the West, not only of immense self aggrandizing possibilities, wherein the foreign and home money-seekers find money; to which the politicians, the rulers, the factionists, the ecclesiastics, from all countries—defeated, banished, suppressed, persecuted—bring themselves and their ambition, to hope again, to strive again, to acquire again: but to the hospitable West, the charitable West, the encouraging and the inspiring West—the

help and the home of the wearied, much wronged, much abused, but still worthy, and still aspiring individual.

I had been greatly wronged, and I had suffered much; but I did not despair, and I was not inconsolable. I had youth, and health, and an occupation; with these—though poor in what remains of happy living—one is rich. Once in the West, I was curious to know what my near future would be, how it would be. Curiosity to know what something yet unknown may be, some times gives us the courage to seek for it. With every disappointment I was more eager to succeed; and in time, the benign destiny that has always assured to my own efforts a certain success, rewarded my faith and my diligence. However, I did not forget that each success of the past had been followed by a misfortune also assured to me by a destiny not benign. No repose of the present, no success of the present, could again persuade me that it would remain an undisturbed repose, or an undisturbed success—not so long as Marcus Pancho lived. But once we are convinced of the existence of a persistent and tormenting obstacle we can not rid ourselves of, we wisely determine to live the best we can, with the expectation always of something disagreeable to happen. We know that this life is robbed of half

of its enjoyment; but we find it agreeable to enjoy the other half. It is like walking through life with a lame member; but it is better than not walking at all.

So I reasoned, when I found myself in a position so agreeable to me, and so satisfactory, that if I deplored the manner in which I had been deprived of my former position, that had also been agreeable and satisfactory, I would not have been willing to return to it then, if I could have done so. In short, I found myself the principle instructress of elocution in the best reputed college of one of the largest, most enterprising, and most cultured cities of the West. And as I had been singularly successful and popular in that great city of the East, so I became singularly successful and popular in this great city of the West.

CHAPTER VIII.

Among the many delightful acquaintances I made in the West, the most delightful was Mrs. Edmonds. While still young, she had been left a widow with one child and an immense fortune. Mrs. Edmonds was born in England; but orphaned at an early age, she and an older sister—who were the only children—were left to the care of kinsfolk; the sister remaining in England, while Mrs. Edmonds, then only three years of age, was brought to this country. Living in the West, educated there—although subsequently she traveled extensively abroad—allying herself to the spirit of progress there, she was a true type of the cultured Western woman.

We do not dispute the innovation that has made the sweet word woman the universal word, instead of the much abused and often mis-applied distinction of lady. But there are women whom no one word, and no assemblage of words, can convey a just complement of all they possess of good-breeding, of unvarying courtesy, of delicacy—of that indefinable fineness that is expressed in the word lady. Mrs. Edmonds was a lady; and the persuasion

within herself that she was one, that following her natural inclinations she could never be otherwise than one—this was the persuasion that instinctively took possession of all who knew her.

Successful, and at the same time superior individuals, can only be truly independent, can only be thoroughly themselves to everybody with impunity—that is, without fear of bringing upon themselves the disagreeable results of the envy and malevolence of those who are inferior and less fortunate—when they are truly the possessors of lofty principles, and when they fearlessly and persistently live these principles.

A universal courtesy, a universal charity, a universal good-heartedness, secured to Mrs. Edmonds a universal liberty. But while to the rich and the poor, the honored and the despised, the distinguished and the obscure, the successful and the unfortunate, to the erring but repentant, as well as to the thoroughly correct individual, there was no variation from this courtesy, this charity, and this good-heartedness; yet, the genuineness of her goodness, as well as the genuineness of her supremacy, secured her from the soiling of familiarity. Energetic and industrious, queenly and compassionate, cheerful and cheering, lovable and loving; the influence of this woman, the perfume of her goodness, was a

mighty and far-reaching good, as it was a refreshing and soft-falling incense, that fortified the minds, and gladdened the hearts of all who knew her, and of many that had only heard of her.

Through my acquaintance with this admirable woman, I was introduced to a young lady with whom I formed an intimacy that was in itself the greatest blessing I had yet known, and that was the source of a later intimacy with another—an intimacy that was the sweetest, the best of my life.

Georgine Ellerton was the daughter of Mrs. Edmonds' sister, who had remained in England. Georgine, and a brother older than herself, had been left orphans at an early age, as their mother and aunt had been. Mrs. Edmonds, whom the then roving disposition of her son had left often alone, eagerly welcomed the beautiful child to her heart and to her home. Whether it was a natural resemblance, owing to the close relationship of the two, or whether it was the result of Mrs. Edmonds' careful training of the child, and her constant association with her, I do not know; but in character and in temperament, in all that rendered her aunt so charming and so lovable, Georgine was the exact counterpart.

Georgine was about the same age as myself; and

the sympathy that had, at the first sight of each other, so strangely attracted us, one toward the other, became a friendship so true and tender, so mutually unselfish, so mutually helpful, in short, so extraordinary in its character and its reliability, that I think I am correct in believing that between woman and woman, the existence of a like friendship is rare.

* * * * *

O, Georgine, Georgine! loving and beloved one,—let me see thee again! Not as I saw thee last, and as I see thee oftenest now—so pale, and cold, and frightfully still; but warm, and joyous, and beautiful, as thou wert in the happy time! Let me see thee as I loved thee best—robed in a soft white gown that graced thy full, exquisite form! Let me see again the waving brightness of the tawny hair; the smooth, pure whiteness of the brow and cheek; the sweet brown eyes, so tender and so glad; the mouth, the little, smiling mouth—oh heaven! to see again, to touch again so much of warmth, so much of loveliness, and then to know it is no longer in this world to see and touch, to know it is my fancy that has cheated me—this is to bring my deadened sense again to life, that I may feel the pain that I have felt.

* * * * *

How happy we were together! and we were always together during the hours I could be absent from my duties. How unalloyed our enjoyment! How tender our affection for each other, how perfect our trust in each other! There was nothing in our past experience that we concealed from each other. With the exceptions of the death of her parents—which bereavement, at the time, she had been too young to fully comprehend—Georgine's entire life had been a joyous one. Until we became attached to each other, her affection had been shared between her aunt and her brother. Towards the first it was an affection naturally the result of a long and tender association; towards her brother—whom, with the exception of rare intervals, once when he had come to America, and several times during a visit to England, she had not seen since they were children—that which she designated as affection, was largely a feeling of reverence for what her memory imputed to him of moral and intellectual supremacy, and a passionate admiration of the personal charms he possessed. Thus the impulses of her heart were as pure as her experiences had been happy; experiences that were pleasing to tell and delightful to hear.

On my part, I withheld nothing that related to the history of my past life from either Georgine or

her aunt. And nothing could be in greater contrast with the peaceful life and happy confidences of Georgine, than the tragic character of my life, that necessitated startling confidences. But startling as they were, Mrs. Edmonds and Georgine repeatedly assured me that the frankness of my confidence in them had endeared me still more to them, and that henceforth I should have not only their love and sympathy, but also their protection. The explanation of the curious facts that were the result of my malady, was credited at once by Mrs. Edmonds. Her intelligent and well informed mind possessed a knowledge of certain scientific investigations and statements, which had prepared her to believe in the possibility of all that I related to her. Thus having added to my own courage the sympathy of Georgine and her aunt, I felt secure from a repetition of the past; or, at least, sufficiently strong to combat it should that repetition occur. But the misfortune against which we are fortified, does not always come; it is often a new experience and an unexpected one.

A little more than a year from the beginning of my intimacy with Georgine, we were separated for the first time. Mrs. Edmonds accepted an invitation to visit a very dear friend of hers who lived in Canada. The season in Montreal was an unusually

brilliant one, and Georgine was urged to accompany her aunt. Georgine had always greatly enjoyed her visit there, but this time it was with a strange reluctance that she assisted in the preparations that were necessary for their prolonged stay ; and it was only in the fear of wounding her aunt by a refusal, that she at last fully decided to accompany her.

“Oh, Ellinore,” she exclaimed, putting her face to mine, “if it were only summer, and you could go with us, I should be wild with delight at the thought of going to Mrs. Fairlies’, for she is a charming hostess, and entertains royally, indeed, is as perfect, in her way, as auntie, and we would all be so happy together ! But I do not want to leave you ! I cannot bear to interrupt the delightful routine of our life ! Auntie says I am really foolish, and that I shall only learn to fully appreciate you when I am parted from you. But I could not appreciate you more than I do now, little queen Ellinore ; because one could not love another more than I love you—could one, dear ?” And having accompanied the question with an appealing look, she signified her satisfaction with my response by giving me an emphatic salute on either cheek. “Do you know, Ellinore,” she resumed, “that I am superstitious about this separation of ours ? I would not tell auntie, for anything ; she would laugh at me, and

say it was only another excuse for not wanting to leave you. But I must tell you. You know I have often said to you that I never felt sad. Well, I have felt, I am sure, more than sad ever since this invitation came—I am depressed. And what frightens me, is, that while I can not imagine any reason for this depression, I am unable to rid myself of it. Let me tell you what I fear, Ellinore,” she said in a low voice, and with a look of affright in her eyes. “I fear that something is going to happen; something —” then hesitating, as though unable to define what she felt, she added, with a little sigh,—“something that we shall not want to happen.”

Holding her close to my heart, I quieted her fears by every reasonable suggestion that occurred to me. How could I tell her that for the first time I had a secret from her? How could I encourage a sadness that was so new to her—a sadness for which I had no reason but my own feelings to invest with a significance? How could I tell her that the same haunting depression that persistently troubled her, weighed also heavily upon me? That it was more than a depression—it was a forboding? That it brought more than fear to me—it brought terror. Yet that was the truth; and try to be happy, as I tried—having no apparent reason not to be; try to reason, to persuade myself of the uselessness of feel-

ing as I felt—all this was ineffectual. A profound mournfulness took possession of me—a complete, a masterful possession. My reasoning was dominated by an indefinable dread, and but one persuasion remained—the persuasion that this first separation of Georgine and myself, this first interruption of the precious enjoyment that was the result of our friendship, this first beginning of a near future we knew nothing of, that this—this was the end of our peaceful life together, as it had been, of our happy life together, as it has been.

CHAPTER IX.

Not long after the departure of Georgine and her aunt, I was surprised to receive a letter from Mr. Sinclair, stating that my mother was in a dying condition, and that she had requested him to inform me, that if I desired to learn certain facts concerning myself, that she had always kept a secret from me, I must come immediately, while she had yet the strength to reveal them to me. To this was added Mr. Sinclair's own entreaties to come; as, in his opinion, the "certain facts" which my mother wished to make known to me, were of a financial nature, and of the greatest importance to me.

To my astonishment at the contents of this letter, and to my desire to know what my mother had to impart to me, was added a still heavier weight to my foreboding, that—withstanding Georgine's often, and always reassuring letters, informing me of her safe arrival, of her continued excellent health, of her always tender affection for me; above all, of the effectual abandonment of the sadness that had troubled her, and of the many enjoyments of her surrounding life—had never ceased to oppress me by day, and to visit me at night in

frightful dreams that had always the same mournful ending, the same dreadful vision for me—Georgine's face as white as the face of the dead; Georgine's eyes, staring and terrified, fixed upon me; Georgine herself fading further and further from my outstretched arms, and leaving me to a frightful darkness and a frightful solitude. And—think of it as you may, laugh at it, if you will—I went to the town I had left years ago, I went to her whom I had known as my mother, with the irresistible conviction, that, without being able to avoid it, I was hastening the approach of a horrible experience.

I found my mother suffering from an incurable malady. She received me as though I had parted from her hours before, instead of years. Neither my long absence, nor her suffering, nor the near and certain approach of death, had conquered, nor even softened, the implacable hatred of this strange woman for me. The wretched hovel that I had fled from in disgust, had grown more wretched in the intervening years—with the exception of the room where my mother lay. The peculiar nature of her disease, and her intense suffering, had compelled her to part with enough of her hoarded money to make this one room habitable, and to furnish herself with the necessaries of life, and with an

attendant, who occupied at night the same room with her.

Feeling sure, at the first sight of my mother, that whatever was the nature of the revelation she had decided to make to me, her decision had been the result of necessity, or of some purpose yet unknown to me, and not because of any suddenly conceived sentiment of kindness towards me, or of remorse for her treatment of me. Feeling sure of this, I did not consider it my duty to domicile myself in the miserable habitation of my mother, during my stay in the town,—which I determined should be as brief as possible—but I secured comfortable lodging elsewhere. This arrangement, I observed, was as satisfactory to my mother as to me. She evidently did not wish to be the cause of my remaining in the town longer than was absolutely necessary; for although I arrived in the evening, she appointed an early hour the following day to impart to me the information which we both understood to be the object of my coming to her.

I was at her bedside at the hour designated; and my mother, after looking at me long and searchingly, with a sullen expression of disapprobation in her face, said abruptly, in the sharp, choleric tone that had always characterized her speech to me, and which expressed at once her hatred and her toleration of me,—

"Yes, as I have often told you, you are like your father; like him in temperament—as self-willed, and proud. But you do not resemble him in the face: No—you are the exact image of your mother."

"What! I look like you? I, the image of you?" I interrupted, incredulously and indignantly; for had I not always remarked, and secretly rejoiced at it, the total absence of any resemblance in myself to my mother.

"Do not interrupt me!" she said, severely. "No matter what you may think, do not again interrupt me. I have no strength to prolong the story with unnecessary explanations that your questioning will require; and *I* do not want to hear *your* voice. *I am not your mother*."

This abrupt and astounding announcement brought me to my feet with an exclamation of amazement—which was promptly silenced by an angry gesture from the woman.

"I repeat it, I am not your mother. Your father was Sir Reginald Trevalyn. Your mother was Lady Ellinore. My father was game-keeper to Sir Reginald's father. You may not believe it, but I was handsome in those days; handsome enough," she added with intense bitterness, "for young Reginald—who was only *Mister* Reginald then—

to woo with smiles and honied words, and afterwards to deceive, to ruin, to abandon. I gave him all I had to give—myself and my honor. But a game-keeper's daughter is the same as nobody; a game-keeper's daughter has no honor, and no heart," she continued, in the same bitter tone. "Even after our baby was born, he came to the lodge every day. He was as proud then, as I was, of the handsome boy. It was born with its father's mark, too—a red cross on the breast, close to the neck. Reginald's mother, soon after the birth of her son, had added to the curious freak of nature, a tiny anchor in India ink. Reginald, pleased with this fancy of his mother, marked also, with his own hand, a similar anchor, below the red cross, on the breast of our boy. 'There!' he said, when he had finished, and in kissing his boy and me, 'Nature has given him the cross of his father, and I have given him the anchor. He is marked for my very own, and wherever you may hide him, I shall find him and claim him as mine.' So you see, he was not ashamed then of his boy; and he was good to me."

The woman had said these last words dreamily, and her voice had lost its hardness. But only for a moment; and it was with intensified bitterness that she continued,—

“Curses on the aristocrat!—for that is what the father of my boy became when, at his father’s death, he became Sir Reginald. Curses on the fair, proud Ellinore!—whose beauty turned the head, and stole the heart, of the man who had sworn to me that he would never wed, but that he would come in secret to see us; that he would always love us, and be true to us—my boy and me. Curses on the pride that drove me and my child—as far as the money and the influence of Sir Reginald could banish us!——”

Here was a long pause, the stillness of which I did not think it wise to interrupt. Then, suddenly, and with a gleam of fury in her eyes, that were not looking at me, but beyond me—as though the scene, that her memory and her imagination brought vividly before her, was again being enacted—the strange creature, apparently unconscious of my presence, resumed her recital.

“He banished us—his boy and me. He was rich and powerful, we were poor and dependent. So long as he loved me, so long as he was kind to our boy, I was his slave, and thought only of pleasing him. When he turned from me, when he abandoned his boy, I became a demon, and I thought only of revenge. He drove us away; but he did not know, that starving, and cold, and wretched, I stole back often and often to watch him through the window,

warmed and fed, loving and beloved, until my maddened sense was left but one desire—to rob him of his happiness, as he robbed me of mine; to leave him only pain—all that he had left me; to see him suffering in the loss of all he loved, the agony that I suffered when he took his love from me; to take from him, as he had taken from me, all hope of happiness, all power of being glad.

She died, the lady Ellinore, no one knew how—but I. And in the madness of Sir Reginald's pain, the great house had no master. The servants heard strange noises; the ghost of Lady Ellinore, they said, went moaning round the house. Poor souls! how easy it was to frighten them! I stood quite close to one, who swore my wild black eyes, and wan, sad face were like the soft blue eyes, and fair, sweet face of Lady Ellinore. The blue eyed babe, so like its mother, that was left to comfort yet Sir Reginald, was stolen from him. That day the frightened household fled; the house itself was called accursed, and had no other tenants than the rooks and swallows, and the ghost of Lady Ellinore—"

Here was another pause, during which the woman seemed still unconscious of my presence; so long unconscious, that I became alarmed. What if she should die before I knew all? As the story had progressed, a feeling of horror at what had been

revealed to me, at what might yet be revealed to me, took possession of me; this, with the fear that from a sudden caprice of the strange woman, or from some unlooked for intervention, I should be prevented from hearing all there was to know, all that I ought to know, had held me dumb throughout the whole of the strange recital; but now, in my desire to know everything, I succeeded in mastering myself to a degree to ask in a quiet, ordinary tone of voice,—

“And Sir Reginald, my father, what became of him?”

The quietness of my manner, the naturalness of my question, did not arouse her sufficiently to permit her to consider my interruption, and she answered as quietly,—

“He died in a madhouse.”

“And your child, your boy and Reginald’s—what became of him?” I asked, still quietly, but with a curious suspicion in my mind,—

“My boy,—My boy,—” she repeated, looking at me savagely; then with a horrible laugh that made me shiver, she added,—“He died too.”

This reply effectually banished the curious suspicion from my mind, and the woman, while making it, was not only aroused to a full consciousness of my presence, but to the full sense of her vindictive-

ness towards me; and with a maniacal exultation in her voice and gestures, she exclaimed,—

“He died, my boy, he died! You are all that is left—you, whom I hate! You who would have been the heiress to a great fortune and a proud name! But you will never be known, now, as the daughter of Sir Reginald Trevalyn! The Trevalyns are all gone—all dead! Lady Ellinore, too, was an only child, and there are none of her family left—not one! The far off kinsman of Sir Reginald would treat you as an impostor. No one in England would believe the story as I have told it to you. They would all say it was the tale of a crazy woman; and it would take a lifetime to prove your identity. Yes, you are only the ‘miser’s daughter—’ you will always be known as such! You have been brought up in all the wretchedness of a miser’s home, believing yourself to be, and believed to be, a child of shame—you, the daughter of the proud Sir Reginald, who despised me and mine! This is why I have degraded myself, this is why I have sought to be despised, this is why I have lived in misery—that you might be despised, that you might share my misery! And tell me, tell me—have I not had my revenge? But even when—ha, ha!—even when I shall be in my grave, even then, my revenge will go on—while Marcus Pancho lives, it will go on! Mar-

cus is good to me—almost as good,” she added with a strange look at me—“as my own boy would have been.”

“Ellinore,” she said, after a pause, “do you know why I have told all this to you? It is—besides the enjoyment of seeing you suffer for what might have been, and for what now can never be—that I may be sure that you will never be enriched by my money. I know your pride—the pride of the Trevalyns—and that, now you know you are not my child, you will not want my money. You will be too proud to contest the will that leaves everything to Marcus Pancho. I love Marcus, I have always loved him; because he is like what I fancy my boy would have been—dark, and handsome, and hating you. Even if no one else should believe all that I have told you, and although they will tell you I am crazy, you will know that I am not, and you will feel that what I have told you is true. You will feel it when you look at your own face in looking upon the face of your mother.”

And simultaneously with these words, she took a locket from under her pillow—an exquisite locket, a costly one—and opening it, showed me the face of a woman about my own age. But that I had never had a picture of any kind taken of myself, I should have believed that I was looking at a fault-

less portrait of myself, copied, unknown to me, from another. The fairness of the face, the sombre blackness of the hair; the eyes, the mouth, every feature was like mine. Only, there was a joyous brightness in the depth of the eyes, that seemed to smile at me, that had never shone in the sad blue of my own.

Long, and with tear-dimmed eyes, I gazed upon the proud young face, feeling that henceforth I should love my own face as I had never done, because I saw in it my mother's; and that I should love my life as I had never done, because it had been first that mother's. And clasping the delicate chain of the locket about my neck, I felt that I would sooner part with life itself, than part with this, the only proof that I was not the daughter, not anything of that vile woman, who, having done all the evil for me that she herself could do, would leave no evil yet to be done by another, that could undo the good her latest words had done—the words that took from me the right to call myself her child, the right to use her gold, and gave to me the right to think of her, whose pictured face I should henceforth wear upon my heart, as my own loving mother.

I had no doubt in my own mind as to the truth of the strange story. As the woman had said—

I felt it to be true. And, although I thought it might be also as she had said, that no one in the town would believe it, and that it would be difficult, perhaps impossible, to establish my rights in England; and although I thought it injudicious to make any efforts to do so, that my then limited means would not permit me to continue with the zeal and alacrity to insure their success; yet, nothing in the present prevented me from determining to make, at a future time that would be more propitious, a thorough and satisfactory investigation. To render this possible—that is, to make the revelation of the dying woman of legal worth to me—it was necessary to have a reiteration of it before legal witnesses; this, with the occurrence of other and unlooked for contingencies, prolonged my stay for some days after the period that I had fixed upon for my departure; and as soon as the required part of the statement was recorded in a proper manner—although both the lawyer and Mr. Sinclair, who were the witnesses, doubted its reliableness—I made preparations to depart: and it was while I was making these preparations—rejoicing that the evil I imagined was about to happen, had not happened—that I made a discovery that greatly troubled me.

The day after my arrival in the town, I had re-

ceived a letter from Georgine, containing an excellent photograph of herself. The letter was full of her joyous self. It was the happiest description of the places she had been, and of the people she had met; concluding with the assurance of a hoped for speedy return to me, and the resolve never again to go any where without me; and with the repetition—of what had been in each of her previous letters—of her unchanging devotion to me; of her aunt's and her own determination to protect me against the persecutions and the villainy of Marcus Pancho—the foe that in being mine, was theirs too, and entitled to their antagonism and to their aversion, as well as to mine—and entreating me to rely on their aid and their affection sufficiently to have no fears for the future.

This letter and the photograph I had placed in a box in my trunk; and in arranging my effects in the latter, I found, to my surprise, that the letter and the photograph were missing. As I was to leave that evening, I made as thorough an investigation as I could make, during the few hours that remained to me. But no one had been seen to enter my room, except the servant—who was entirely trustworthy; besides, as nothing else had been taken, either from my trunk or from my room, it was evident that a particular interest in the letter

and photograph, had alone impelled the singular theft. This fact was more alarming to me, because I had had all the time the impression that the sorrow I feared was to come in the near future for me, would be the result of a misfortune to Georgine. It was only her letter and her photograph that had been taken from me; but they were something of her, something already gone, gone in a mysterious manner—and from that time, the foreboding, that had for a brief period dissipated itself, returned, and had a still more depressing effect upon me.

There was nothing in the letters—that, after my return to my home and duties, I received without interruption from Georgine—to encourage my fears for her future. They were brimming over with expressions that could only be prompted by a most joyous mind and heart, and the result of the most satisfying experiences. But there was a change; a change that had added to the already unalloyed happiness of her existence, a deeper, sweeter, more womanly—and I shuddered at the thought that it might be a more perilous—happiness.

Georgine was loving, and was believing herself beloved. Beloved, as she enthusiastically declared, by the only man, besides her brother, whom she had ever known to possess the charms of person, and the qualities of mind and heart with which she

had invested her ideal lover and husband, and which were essential that the man should possess, to be worthy of the respect and the love she had in reserve to offer him. Her letters were continued dissertations upon this one theme: of her seeing him for the first time, while she was promenading with her aunt; of his being invited to the house where she visited, by the son of the hostess—with whom (the son) the acquaintance had been accidental—and of his introduction to her there; of the admiration and esteem with which the entire household, including her aunt, regarded him; of her own intimacy with him, approved of by her aunt, which had been the result of a mutual and instantaneous liking at the first sight of each other; of the charm of his manner, of his kindness, of his devotion to her—all this had been told and retold, in each letter, and in as many varied forms as her enthusiasm and the power of her imagination would permit her to portray.

I could see that she was loving this man with her whole soul, and with all the abandonment that her own and her aunt's confidence in his worth inspired. I could see, too, that her heart was satisfied with its loving and its love. Why then was I not happy? Why should I not be even happier than I had ever been—knowing that she was hap-

pier than she had ever been? Without doubt she would marry this Oscar Lyndhurst; she would belong to him, she would go wherever he would go; her life would be united to his life. I should not be able to go with her, I should no longer be, as she believed I would be, a necessary part of her life. Our plans for the future, that we had long ago arranged, and so often talked about, could not now be carried out; or, at best, they would be subjected to the will of her husband, and to the circumstances that her alliance to him would bring about. But all this was natural; all this, if I had not thought of it, was to be thought of, was to be expected.

Was I then selfish, was I then unhappy only because she had found another being that she loved more than she loved me? If my love for her was as noble and disinterested as I had always believed it to be, could I be so unhappy for no other cause than the contemplation of a destiny, that must be for her, if it be all that she believed it to be, as it is for every good woman—her best good? I could not then convince myself that I was thus selfish—I know now that I was not. But the truth was, that I could not feel the security in her future, with the man she loved, that she and her aunt, and evidently others about her, felt. Besides, there

was present with me the gloom of a threatening calamity; and still, night after night, I saw Georgine, always the same—pale, and silent, with horror in her staring eyes, and fading from me.

CHAPTER X.

The winter weeks that—before Mr. Lyndhurst came—Georgine had joyously announced were to be the limit of our separation, lengthened into months; and I knew that it was the power and the charm of the man she loved, that was keeping Georgine from me. Business had retained Mr. Lyndhurst in Montreal; for the same reason they lingered through the spring months in New York—where they had stopped on their way home. They were always together—Mrs. Edmonds and the affianced lovers; for the engagement had already been made known, and the marriage was to take place the following Autumn. It was only when Lyndhurst announced the positive necessity of his quitting them for a time, to rejoin them later, that Georgine and her aunt came home.

How beautiful she was! How more than ever beautiful! Never have I seen a being so perfectly, so confidently happy! Hers was a bliss yet added to the unclouded happiness that had always been her life. How greatly I had wronged her, in thinking she had loved me less! Dear heart—she loved me more! And when I told her all that I had feared,

tears came into her eyes ; tears, not of pain—she was too happy for that—but tears that expressed nothing except the fulness of her desire to make me know, to make me feel, the increased tenderness of her affection for me.

“ Oh, my sweet Ellinore ! Do you think because I have been so long away from you, and because I have talked only of Oscar, that I have been forgetting you ? Ah, dear, if ever you love as I love Oscar, you will understand why, in my loving of him, I love you more than I have ever loved you. It is simply that I know more of love, that I know better how to love. If you would only believe how good and kind he is ! How thoughtful and tender he is, not only for me, but for all whom I love ! If you could have seen him when I talked about you ; when I told him of your past life, and all about that dreadfully wicked Marcus Pancho ; and of my hatred of him, for your sake ; and of my determination and that of my aunt to protect you from his persecutions and his presence, and never to permit you to be parted from us ; if you could have seen his eyes flash, and his cheeks color with emotion, as I saw them do when I told him all this, and of my great affection for you,—you would be convinced, as I am, that you have found in my lover another friend ; and that you will find in him, as my husband, another

protector ; and that in securing my happiness with him, I shall be securing yours."

At another time she said,—

"Little queen Ellinore, you are never to leave us—auntie, Oscar and me. We have planned everything, Oscar and I. Oscar is very rich ; so rich, that he declares we shall have no need of my money. He was not satisfied till he had proved this fact to my aunt. I was indignant at the thought of it, but auntie said he had only done what was his duty to do, and that she esteemed him yet more for his promptness in doing it unasked: I, you know—besides the big, big fortune I inherited, equally with my brother, from my parents—I have a small fortune that was left to me, unconditionally, by an aunt of my father's. This little fortune I am going to secure to you—I have already secured it to you. There ! do not say a word," she exclaimed, putting her hands over my mouth to silence my protestations, and kissing my eyes that had filled with tears, at this proof of her unselfish and generous devotion. "If you refuse to accept this practical proof of my affection for you, Ellinore, I shall know that you are too proud to owe anything to me ; and that in feeling towards me as you do towards others, you do not love me as I love you ; and I shall be very unhappy. This little fortune" she continued joy-

ously, interpreting my silence as an acceptance of her generous gift—although mentally I had already decided never to touch the principal, and to use the interest only as a loan to aid my efforts to secure a recognition of my rights in England; “this little fortune I have secured to you, so that whether I live or die, the daughter of Sir Reginald Trevalyn will no longer be obliged to do any thing she will not wish to do. Auntie also is too rich to live happily alone; she will never be able to exist contentedly away from me; and I can not think of living, even with Oscar, away from you. So this is what we are going to do—auntie and you, and Oscar and I—when I am Oscar’s wife: we are going to travel every where, before we permanently settle either here or in England. But first, we are going to England to put your case into the hands of a competent lawyer, and, if possible, establish your rights to the name and the estate of your father. This, auntie and I have decided, since our return, to do; and—as you have forbidden me to say anything to any one about the strange story told to you by ‘the miser’—of course Oscar knows nothing about that part of your history; but if he knew, he would be as enthusiastic, I am sure, as we are, to accomplish all that we expect to accomplish for you.

“And now for our plans for the summer! The first of June, we—that is auntie, and you and I—are going out to cousin Ned’s ranch in the Rocky Mountains. Ned has implored auntie for the last three years to come. He says he has made special preparations to receive us; and that his cabin is gorgeous in savage luxury, and that it does not lack in the necessary comforts of civilization. Now I am wild to go; first, because it will be so different from the experience of every summer at the fashionable resorts; secondly, because I am curious to see what the attractions are, in this ranch-life, that can more than compensate—seeing he persists in exiling himself thus—for the advantages, the luxuries, the associations, that home and social life have to offer to a man so refined in his tastes and his habits as is my cousin Ned. Then, too, Oscar and I shall see more of each other in the seclusion of this ranch-life, than at the crowded resorts. It is there, little queen Ellinore, that you will first see Oscar; and I wish you were as desirous to meet him as he is to meet you. If I were not loving you more than I love myself, I should be jealous of the interest he takes in all that concerns you; but he knows well, that to love you, as my friend, is to make himself still more worthy of my love.

“Oh, my dear friend!” she cried impulsively,

“you will never be able to do anything else than love Oscar—he is so, so handsome! Never have I seen any one, not even my brother Courtney, so handsome! Do you know, dear, there is something about his face that reminds me of you? I can not tell whether it is the expression about the mouth, or in the eyes—indeed, if it be either. It is an indefinable resemblance, but it is something that I see every time I look upon his face—something that fascinates. There! I have never told you what his face is like; and I am not going to tell you now. I want you to be surprised. I want you to be impressed as he shall appear first to you, without the aid of a preparatory portrait of him from me. Now, daughter of Sir Reginald and Lady Ellinore,” she concluded, with a smile, “we have nothing to do but to get ourselves ready for this invasion upon the bachelor home of cousin Ned; and, in the meantime, I want you to be happy in the present, and to trust the happiness of your future to me, as I trust the happiness of mine to Oscar.”

It was impossible to resist the influence of this joyous, light-hearted girl; and if I was not as happy as I secretly desired to be, nor as sanguine as Georgine and her aunt of the brilliant future that seemed to be assured to her, I was certainly much happier than I had been before Georgine's return; and I

tried to persuade myself that my gloomy impressions and my fears, had been the effect of my loneli-
ness and my too active imagination.

CHAPTER XI.

Ned Edmonds was the only child of Mrs. Edmonds. Affectionate in his disposition, frank in his temperament, generous and noble hearted; enjoying immense social advantages; fitted by his natural endowments, and a thorough education, to attain a prominent position, and to secure an enviable success, either as a public leader or as a private citizen; he astonished his friends, as well as his mother, by refusing to be anything that would require the permanent establishing of himself among them; and, after wandering for years from country to country, and from place to place, until he had satisfactorily traversed every habitable part of the globe, he returned unexpectedly, after a long absence, to announce his intention—in order to reconcile his inclination to Bohemianism with his desire to be more frequently with his mother—to settle on a ranch in the far West, where he could enjoy the freedom of thought and of movement, of will and of action, that was a necessity of his nature to enjoy; as well as, from time to time, the sweets of

home life and of filial affection, that the impulses of his loving heart, and the memories of his boyhood, gave him always a longing to enjoy.

Convinced, by a long experience, that her son would never become the useful citizen she had hoped he would become, and that his decision not to marry was a final one; and beginning to fear he would never return from his wanderings; Mrs. Edmonds was even thankful that her son had settled into this modified state of savagery—as she designated the life and habits of a ranchman. But glad and thankful as she was, she could not divest herself of a certain terror of the native Indian, of dreadful beasts, of venomous serpents, of deadly insects, of poisonous flowers, of perils unknown and unseen—that were said to abound in the ranch lands of the Rocky Mountains, and which were liable at any moment to prove fatal to the invaders of its savage loneliness. It was owing to this terror—despite Ned's glowing description of the beauty of the place—that his mother had resisted, for three successive summers, his eloquent supplications to herself and to Georgine to visit him; and it was only when Georgine had suddenly expressed a great desire to go, and when to Ned's supplications were added Georgine's earnest and oft repeated persuasions, that Mrs. Edmonds was at last induced to venture

on what she dolefully assured us was likely to be our "last excursion."

But Mrs. Edmonds was not more astonished than were Georgine and myself, as we entered the valley on our approach to Ned's ranch. Nothing could exceed the loveliness and the grandeur of the scene that held us mute with wonder and admiration. The valley—which is about twenty-five miles long and one hundred wide—lies between two ranges of the Rocky Mountains. As far as the eye could see, the valley was covered with long waving grass that looked like a far stretching drapery of softly radiant green, held by invisible hands that gently waved it to and fro with the sighing of the wind. Vast herds of cattle, that looked like dusky specks, were slowly moving onward through the billowy green. A limpid stream flowed from the mountain side, traversed half way the valley, and continuing on, looked, in the glow of the setting sun, like a luminous and undulating line that reaching on and on into the endless green, seemed to fade into the far off blue of the horizon. Above, the mountain tops were all aflame; and down through the darkness of wide canyons and huge crevices, the same resplendent baptism fell—sometimes on cascades that went dancing down the rocky steeps; sometimes upon a silent, mighty sweep that fell to

unfathomable depths below; and down, still down the gleaming of the sunset fell, more softly and less gloriously on tops of lower, less aspiring trees, that through the misty golden light showed green and green—such shades of green as never mortal artist could conceive, and never painter's brush could reproduce. High over us, but nearer us than heaven—since they were far below the loftiest mountain peaks that seemed to touch the firmament—clouds floated; clouds of gray, and rose, and gold, and violet. Above the clouds, above the gilded mountain tops, a sky of blue, of pure, unclouded blue—this was heaven's fair canopy for the scene below. The scented air around us breathed out the sweets of prairie and of mountain flower. The splendor of the scene, the quiet of the scene—our souls were awed to worshipful silence at the sight of it; our hearts were hushed to repose at the peace of it; and we no longer wondered that Ned Edmonds, who had seen every vanity under the sun, had turned from the prescribed loveliness and freedom of our city homes, to the large liberty, the varied loveliness of this natural kingdom, wherein he reigned a happy and contented sovereign.

Ned had made his first advent into the valley as a veritable ranchman, or cattle dealer. At that time there was a German settlement on the western

side of the valley, and Ned's extensive ranch was established on the eastern side. Two years previous to our peaceful invasion, Ned, while camping out about ten miles from his ranch, near a quarry—from which stone had been taken to build the chimneys of the houses that composed the German settlement—discovered a rock in this quarry that contained silver ore. On examination, even the chimneys in the houses of the German settlement were found to contain this precious metal. The mine that Ned had discovered, and of which he became the sole owner, proved to be of immense value; so that he was not only a lordly ranchman, but he was lord of a large portion of the valley.

The German settlement, that through his wealth and influence had become a large and flourishing town, was far enough from Ned's own habitation to insure him an undisturbed enjoyment of all that it is presumed he hoped to enjoy as the result of the taste and care he bestowed upon it, to say nothing of the prodigious amount of money expended in the creation of it, and which was really a "thing of beauty, and a joy," if not "forever," so long as he chose to enjoy it, and so long as the guests that were invited from time to time, to share his hospitality, were disposed to enjoy it. For if the loveliness of the valley had astonished us, the unique

loveliness of what Ned's letters had taught us to designate as his "cabin," amazed us.

Besides innumerable out-buildings, that which was properly Ned's domicile, was a long line of apartments all on one floor—the ground floor. Each apartment—consisting of four or more rooms—occupied the entire width of the building. In the length, these apartments were separated, one from another, by a solid partition which was provided with a single door that led into a hall, across which was the entrance to the following apartment. The apartments themselves were separated into their several rooms by heavy draperies. The floor of each room was made of natural wood highly polished, the centre of which was covered with thick, soft rugs, brilliant in color and rich in fabric; or with tiger skins and bear skins, and other long, soft haired treasures from the backs of wild animals. Tapestry, warm in color and unique in design, completely covered the walls, upon which were hung or fastened rare paintings, pretty engravings, gems in mosaic, carvings in ivory, and all sorts of costly trifles and bric-a-brac—from the head of a Madonna to an embroidered sandal. The furniture was of the same character; luxurious ottomans and quaint divans; curiously carved and superbly cushioned chairs, tables and mirrors solidly made yet exquis-

itely made: these, and every conceivable thing that was ornamental and useful, from the refinements of Europe and the luxurious splendor of the Oriental, to the gorgeous fancies of the native Indian and the ingenious inventions of our own America; all that could delight one, all that could add to one's comfort—all this composed the lordly ranch of this lordly ranchman.

Crossing the hall from our apartment—which was at the extreme end of the building, and which was assigned exclusively to Georgine and myself—we entered the library, which on the opposite side opened through heavy *portières* into a vast and luxurious drawing-room; beyond this, and separated from it also by *portières*, was the music-room. Crossing this, and again a hall, we were at the entrance to the apartment of Mrs. Edmonds, which, in its turn, led to Ned's and thence to other apartments beyond.

Mrs. Edmonds was effectually cured of her prejudices and her fears in regard to this “land of savages”—as she had always designated it—as well as of her anxiety in regard to Ned. The Bohemian that she had deplored, she confessed now to herself, and to him, merited only her sincere admiration and her sincere praise. That her son having exhausted the delights and the torments, the sweet and the

bitter of all that which is defined by the word worldliness, should seek, and should be contented with, the grandeur of the mountains, the repose of the valley, and the companionship of the beautiful about him; that he was happy with his books and his thoughts, and a few invited friends to share the enjoyments of his home—this was a proof not of immorality, but of nobility; not of a vitiated taste, but of a healthful one. He was henceforth not to be deplored, but to be envied. All this Mrs. Edmonds frankly and generously expressed to Ned, with the promise that so long as he chose to live in that fashion, with every summer, she should come to share with him the enjoyment and the repose of his retreat. And Ned, who loved his mother more than anything in the world, with something that looked like tears shining in his eyes, declared that this promise, and her new confidence in him, were all that had been lacking to make his happiness complete; and that hereafter, life for them should be spent in a mutual confidence in each other, and, as much as would be practicable, in the companionship of each other.

Georgine was wild with delight. “Oh, how beautiful it is!” she exclaimed again and again, looking at the blue sky above, the green valley below, and the far-stretching mountains on either side;

then going in-doors, and from room to room, looking at the curious and beautiful things. "To live in this wondrously lovely valley, in this uniquely beautiful home—it is like living in a story book! I never saw anything like it! And auntie is so happy with cousin Ned. And I—oh Ellinore! when Oscar comes, when my love comes, I shall want—of course I shall want to stay right here, in this lovely wonderland, but I fear I shall be too happy; so happy, that some day, in one of these enchanted nooks, I shall find wings, and fly up, and up, to the far off tops of those mountains—but, if I had wings," she added laughingly, "you know I would fly back again. Oh Ellinore, dearest Ellinore; why are you the only one in this happy place that is unhappy? For you are unhappy, although—yes, I must say it—you have everything to make you happy. Tell me what troubles you—you must tell me Ellinore! You are keeping something from me—you who have often said you would never keep anything a secret from me!" And the brown eyes, now serious, were looking at me earnestly, waiting for my reply.

It was true; even in this paradise of a home, this paradise of loving hearts, I was the only unhappy one. And it was impossible to wholly conceal the condition of my mind from Georgine; she was too closely allied to my thoughts and my affec-

tions. But it was also impossible to banish entirely the forboding, that had not only returned with my advent into that valley of repose—repose for all but me—but that had augmented with every day that had brought nearer the arrival of Oscar Lyndhurst; and on that day—the evening of which he was expected to arrive, it had so completely and painfully taken possession of me, that I was positively ill. To the fever of dread that was consuming me, was added an intense desire to conceal the real cause of my indisposition from Georgine. But looking at her as she sat on a low seat beside the divan upon which I was reclining, her cheeks flushed with a deep happiness, so radiantly, so bewilderingly beautiful, the thought that any evil might come to dim that happiness, to destroy it, that it was even now coming—this thought, this fear, overcame my already over excited imagination, and in answer to her question, and in a voice that was uncontrollable in its sobbing and its agitation, I cried,—

“Why am I so unhappy? Oh Georgine, Georgine! It is that I fear I am going to lose you! That some day that man, the man you love so madly, and trust so entirely, will take you away from me—so far from me that I may never see you again, never be with you again! For who knows but that, despite

all you say, he may not like me, once he has seen me, may not wish you to love me! It would then only be a question of giving me up, as your friend, or giving him up, as your lover; and oh, my darling, you know that you would leave me to go with him, where—where—I cannot go!” And shivering as the vision of my dream, that had become familiar, came before me—the vision of Georgine, pale, and silent, and fading away from me—convulsively I clasped her in my arms.

“Ellinore, my sweet Ellinore! You terrify me—not for myself, but for you! But—who knows?” And suddenly a sad, far-away look came into her eyes. “I too felt strangely sad before I went to Montreal—before I knew my Oscar. Could that sadness have been a presentiment of evil? My life has been so joyous, so unclouded! But sorrow, they say, must come sometime to all of us, to each of us; and, who knows, perhaps in the near future it will come to me? Ah, if it should come through Oscar! If he should cease to love me! If he should be taken, in any way, from me! Ellinore, that would mean death for me.” And her eyes had the look of terror that I had seen in them only once before. “But,” and her face brightened again, “that cannot be! My unhappiness can never come through Oscar—my Oscar, so good, so tender, so true! What-

ever may happen, I can be sure of this—that although sorrow may come to me by coming to him, it will never come to me through him, that is, through an action unworthy of him. He could not be unkind to me—and it would be cruelly unkind to take me from you. You know that I will never cease to love you, Ellinore, and that I will never be parted from you. You know this without my promising it to you; but to seal the assurance more surely to you, I promise it with this—and this—and this!” And impulsively she kissed my brow, and cheek, and lips. Later, she left me with feverish haste, and with a great gladness shining in her eyes. Then there was a faint sound of voices in glad greetings, a gentle confusion in the household—and I knew that he whom Georgine had so happily expected, he for whom I in dread had waited, had come.

My head was still aching, and I had announced to both Georgine and Mrs. Edmonds, my unwillingness to see Mr. Lyndhurst that evening; so that I remained undisturbed until a late hour, when Georgine, passing through my room to her own, approached my bed, and murmured softly in my ear,—

“Ellinore, oh Ellinore! He is handsomer than ever, he is more loving than ever, and dearer—yes,

dearer than ever to me! I am so happy—oh, if you only knew how happy!” This was all; but the lustrous softness of the eyes, in the full moonlight, the wondrous rapture upon the face, the trembling sweetness of the voice, all this—told the story of a bliss too deep to tell in words.

The next morning it was late when I awoke. I did not know how late, until Georgine coming into my room, fresh and sweet in a white morning gown, announced that breakfast was over, and that she and Oscar were going for a ramble. Then, shaking her finger playfully at me, she said,—

“Remember, no more headaches, my Ellinore! You positively must be ready to see Oscar on our return; he is getting unmanageable in his impatience to see you. Ah, sweet,” she added, in a caressing way, “how lovely you are! How proud I am of you, and how much I love you—and Oscar!” And smiling gayly she kissed me good-bye.

O Father in Heaven! pity us, Thy children of Earth, who, mad with the happiness of a blissful present, are all unconscious of the evil whose black wings are already closing over us, to sweep us into a perpetual night of sorrow!

The acute physical pain of the day before, had subsided into a dull throbbing; and the painful, nervous agitation, into a corresponding insensibil-

ity. Powerless to avert the dreadful event, of whose coming my instinct—or some power unknown to me—warned me, I was simply mutely and helplessly awaiting it. In the same listless manner I made my toilette, and descended, after some hours, to the drawing-room, with the intention of proceeding to the apartment of Mrs. Edmonds; but on rapping at her door and receiving no response, I retraced my steps to the library—preferring its shaded stillness to that of the sun-lighted drawing-room—to await Georgine and her companion, and with the vague intention of giving Georgine a glad surprise by appearing in the drawing-room, in order to receive them, at the moment of their return. Sitting there for some time with closed eyes, and not thinking intently of anything, I was disturbed by what I thought was the sound of a light footstep; and observing that the drapery in front of me was agitated, as at the touch of some one about to enter, I hastily drew it aside, and seeing no one, surprised, I reclosed it, and turning—*was face to face with Marcus Pancho.*

It was not my habit to cry aloud, however unexpectedly or unpleasantly intruded upon. The frequency of such intrusions had taught me, early in life, a rare self-control. Marcus was aware of this, and that he had nothing to fear from a sudden out-

cry; but he was not prepared for my immediate turning from him, without a word, with the intention of fleeing from him; and I had already advanced several steps with this purpose, when he precipitated himself before me, and grasping me with tiger-like fierceness, drew me violently back, while he said hurriedly, and in a low tone, that which the first dreadful utterance held me horrified, and, for the moment, dumb before him,—

“*I am Oscar Lyndhurst!* Do you want to kill Georgine? For it will surely kill her to let her know, in this sudden way, that the man she knows and loves as Oscar Lyndhurst, is Marcus Pancho, the man you hate—the man she hates, too, for your sake! Fearing this, I have tried, and have at last succeeded, to see you first alone. To tell Georgine the truth in an abrupt way, would kill her, you know it;” then seeing my eyes dilate with horror, he added—“would kill her too soon.”

I felt myself growing mad with horror and a deadly hatred of the man. I had no thought of doubting the dire statement he had made. I *felt* that it was true. I knew that this was the horrible thing that was to come.

“Fiend incarnate!” I cried. “I thank Heaven that has cheated you, at this latest hour, when you believe yourself surest of success! I will unmask

you, now, to my Georgine! I will show you to her, not in the likeness of a man—which you are not—but as the devil, that you are! I will tell her of this deadly wrong to her, that added to my wrongs for which, for my sake, she hates you now, she yet may give you deadly hatred for her own sake! I know my Georgine, and that she will turn from you with horror, once she knows you as you are,—”

And then a thought came to my mind that held me mute before the fiend that, smiling, guessed my thought. What if Georgine should not believe in the wickedness of the man before me, as I believed it? What if his power over her was so great that he would be able to persuade her that I was mistaken, that I had always been mistaken in my estimate of him, and that I had wronged him in believing that he had wronged me? Ah, then I should lose her—as I had all the time feared I should do! Or, what if she would entirely believe me? What if her pure mind should at once perceive, as I believed it would, the baseness of the man she believed to be so noble and so good? What if she should realize at once, as I believed she would, the shame of loving a man like that, and the peril of accepting his love—for I had no doubt but that he loved her? And before me came the suffering face of my Georgine—the face that I had but now seen

so wondrous glad. And seeing her thus, with the gladness all gone from her heart, the happiness gone from her life; Georgine stricken with a sorrow, a dreadful, irreparable sorrow, that had been prepared for her by the man she loved, the lover through whom she had so confidently believed a suffering to her could not come: seeing her thus, I knew that the truth would be for her—as she had assured me such a dreadful truth would be—her death. And feeling the hopelessness of doing anything to avert, or to prevent the evil that was coming to her, as it had already come to me; and half distraught in the agony of this hopelessness, I fell on my knees, and with my hands toward Heaven, I cried,—

“O God, save my darling! Save her from the power of this evil one! Thou alone art able to save!”

“Ellinore, Ellinore!” (It was the creature against whom I was crying to Heaven, that repeated my name.) “Ellinore, I want you to listen to me.”

I did not reply, and his touch was upon my shoulder. At the touch I sprang to my feet, and, without speaking, my eyes were fixed upon him. I seemed to be waiting for what he had to say; but in reality, I was hardly conscious of the presence of the man. I was as a victim in the hands of the

slayer; and while I waited, and he talked, it vaguely seemed to me I yet put off the last, the fatal stroke, and that yet help might come.

“Ellinore,” he continued in a low, but distinct voice, “you remember that at our parting, when you left your home for the first time, I told you in what manner I regarded you. You refused then, by a contemptuous silence, to regard me with affection, and to owe to me the enjoyment of your life; and, Ellinore, I swore then, that you should owe to me the unhappiness of your life. I hoped to accomplish this most effectually when you would one day love—as all women desire to love. Beautiful, fascinating, charming, I knew that all men would admire you, that many would seek you, and that some one, whom you would love, would eventually love you—passionately, madly love you. To take this love from you, to effectually take it; to leave you the pain that is keenest to a woman’s heart, to any human heart—this was to be the supreme triumph of my revenge. But time passed without this opportunity. The only extraordinary affection you evinced for any one, was for Mabel Livingston. You know what followed. To rob you of her confidence and of her affection, it was necessary to rob her of her home and of her reputation. When she left you, your prosperity left you, and your friends deserted you.

Again you prospered, again you were happy. In the enjoyment of your present success, you had forgotten the pain and humiliation of the past. I was convinced that in the misfortune that I had brought upon you, your pride had suffered in the loss of your position, more than your heart had suffered in the loss of the object of its affection. I believed you to be singularly cold, or singularly cautious. I was mistaken. You were neither one nor the other. You were capable of a profound affection, and of a passionate devotion. You had not yet found the man who could inspire this loving, but you had found the woman who had inspired it. It was my fortune, and not your fault, that I discovered this—for experience had taught you to make a secret of your happiness. However, I was too deeply interested in you to be ignorant of your movements. I knew that the letter you had received from Mr. Sinclair, would bring you back once more to the town from which, hating it, you had fled. I saw you when you came. I was often near you without your suspecting it. I was in your room when you were not there. Here is the photograph you missed from your trunk—the photograph of Georgine, the woman you love. Here too is the letter, her letter, that told me of your extraordinary devotion for each other, and of your extraordinary confidence

in each other; that told me, too, of a mutual sentiment towards me—of her hatred of me, born of your hatred of me; of your mutual contempt of all that I might have the intention to do, and the assurances of her protection, and that of her aunt, against whatever I might do.

It was easy to find this friend; easy to be introduced to her; still easier, as Oscar Lyndhurst, to impress her with the excellency of my character—as no one had disputed the excellency of my reputation. You know the rest, and that Georgine loves me with all the power of her being to love. But you do not know, you do not even suspect, that I have won her love without a thought of loving her; that I have appointed the wedding-day without either the desire or the intention to marry her; that I have deceived her, only to deceive you. And I have done this, Ellinore, that I may, in striking her, strike you; that in seeing her happiness turned to sorrow, I shall see yours turned to sorrow; that in knowing she suffers, I shall know that you suffer. And now that I have told you the truth, you are free to tell it to her; but the blow to her pride, that will come with this telling, the blow to her heart; the love taken from her life, the gladness taken from it, this will be, you know, Ellinore, as well as I—that it will be her death.”

“Ellinore!—Ellinore!——”

Like the faint sighing of my name in the wind, came the sweet, far off voice of Georgine. The man started at the sound. I heard it as in my dreams I had so often heard it; and with a stifling, sickening, paralyzing sense of the horrible, and feeling already the chill of death—the death that was coming to take my darling from me—I tried to answer, to cry aloud; but my voice was in loud whispers, as pointing to the fiend before me, I gasped.

“You!—you would not—murder her?—my Georgine!—my——”

There was a sudden and violent parting of the drapery that led into the drawing-room; then a strange, gurgling sound, a deadly white face, eyes that were already fixed in their look of horror, and—the outstretched form of Georgine lay before me.

With a wild, wild shriek, I was kneeling beside the still form, kissing the white face, looking at the staring eyes of my dead Georgine. This I remember—this horrible thing that I shall remember as long as I live; and then came a blank in my existence—the blank of an unknowing and an unthinking life.

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

Months followed of a life of which I have no remembrance that I lived. No efforts of long waiting and much loving ones, can bring to me the memory of a single sound, a single sight, from that which was to me a deep, perpetual silence, and the darkness of a long, long night. Then came a time when my poor living began vaguely to feel life; when it became a dream within a dream. For I remember it as I remember other dreams; and were it not that others say it is all true, and had I not had the sweetest vision of those dreamy days still mine, a living, loving presence, in the after wakening days, I should even now believe it was a dream.

What were those days of troubled, feeble growing consciousness, but days of changeful phantasms that I watched in dreamy wonder come and go! The ships on which we sailed, the countries we traversed, the cities where we dwelt; the sea of faces ever changing, ever new—all these, were pictures of an ever shifting scene, each vanishing to leave no trace but memory, faint, bewildering, fugitive, to tell that it had been.

But there were two visions that staid and staid. One was a tender, mother face, that never left me, and that from habit I had learned by heart, and that from habit I had come to know was good, and that it staid for my own sake ; the other was a face that my stupid seeing did not then know was one, but *something* fair and kind that beamed upon me from a softly golden radiance set about it like a crown.

Oh, shining, golden hair ! Oh, face so fair and sweet ! Oh vision, God given, that made my feeble living glad, without my knowing that gladness was a thing to feel ! By it I counted, in my poor, dumb way, how came the day, and how the night—its coming was my day ; and when the vision vanished, it was night. It was my sun, around which my small consciousness revolved ; and while it shone on me, I must have done the things that pleased it best ; for there was more of that sweet something in the kindness that could make me glad. Sometimes this vision had a voice ; it said—ah me ! I know not what it said : I only heard the voice, so low, and sweet, it pleased me while it troubled me. I think I vaguely wished that I could think where I had heard it, in some other life. This vision was my life ; its giving made my little world of drowsy thoughts ; thoughts of such vague sweetness that to close my eyes, even now, and think of them, is to

believe myself again rocked to the sweetness of that slumber, and soothed by the enchantment of its dreams.

And then my dream life ended. I awoke; awoke first to painful consciousness, as though the dreadful thing, that thirteen months before had struck all conscious life from me, had just then been. There in that far off valley home—Ned's home—within the shaded library, I stood. And there was Marcus Pancho—dark, and terrible. And there—oh heaven! the curtains parted, and I saw the white, scared face, the staring eyes, and then,—the fallen, lifeless form of my Georgine; and with a mighty cry I threw my frenzied self upon what I believed to be the precious dead. And then a woman's tender voice spoke soothingly to me; and arms, stronger than a woman's, bore me from the dreadful sight to the quiet of a room; something was held close to my lips, which, when my will strove to resist, the woman's tender voice soothed to obedience. And then sleep came—a dreamless sleep that gave me back, even while I slept, my healthful life again. Waking, my eyes looked first upon the sweet and anxious face of Mrs. Edmunds, that was bending close to mine. My hands were clasped within her own. She did not speak, but looked upon me through her tears; glad tears, for my sake—but

which I believed were like mine, sorrow's tears, and in my pity I too was dumb.

Without an effort I took up my new and conscious life from where it had had its strange and mournful end. With keenest anguish my awakened mind lingered upon the scene that had left me living, and my darling dead. I lay within my own familiar room. Her room I could not see; the drapery—quite thrown back in other days, that we might make of our two rooms one—was now close drawn. Alas! I knew the meaning. It was that never more within that room, in any room, nor anywhere upon this beauteous earth, would come again my darling, my Georgine. And sobbing sobs that made my heart grow sick, I started up.

“Do not go, dear Ellinore,—not yet!” The voice was gentle, but the hand was firm that forced my head again upon the pillow.

“Let me go!” I cried, “oh, let me go, to stay beside her! Alas! it is but a little while that I may stay!”

“Poor Ellinore! You have been ill—for many days you have been ill; and,—” She paused, to see if I would know the rest that she would say.

“You mean,” I cried with faltering voice and quivering lips, “that I can not see her, can not go to her—that she is no more here to see! That while I was ill you took her away! That you—you have——”

“That we have laid her in the grave.” Sadly these words my lips refused to say, fell on my ear. “Not here,” she added; “no, we bore her to her home. You remember, Ellinore, the little plot of ground she loved so well; and that, looking at it once with you, she chose for her own? She sleeps there, Ellinore.”

Then I, with wonder looking from my eyes,—

“How many days have I been ill, that this could be and I not know that it has been?”

“Oh, many days, sweet Ellinore, and weeks, and months; a year, and yet a month!”

Then springing from the bed to where a full length mirror gave me back a rounded, healthful likeness of myself, I cried, the wonder growing,—

“How have I been ill, to have been so long ill, and yet to look like this? It seems but yesterday, but now, that here, in this same home, within the shaded room beyond this room, I stood and looked upon the awful sight; and this—yes, this is the same gown I wore—” And at the memory of that dreadful time I paused, then, shuddering, added,—

“You came too, when all was over—you and Ned; as in a dream I saw you. It was your voice that tried to soothe me, and it was Ned that lifted me from where I frenzied lay beside the dead, and bore me here within this room, upon this bed; and you and

he it was that drugged me to a sleep. You see I know it all, quite to the moment when I fell asleep. A year, and yet a month, you say ?—”

Again I paused, while a curious thought flashed through my mind, of the malady that for years had played me such strange tricks. If I had lived for hours, not knowing that I lived, might not the same strange life go on for months and years ? I had read of beings who had lived like this, had heard of some who had thus lived. While I was thinking thus, no word came from her, who patient waited, to break the silence of my thoughts. She was too wise to throw at once the radiance of full meaning upon the darkness of the way from which I was, of my own self, then groping slowly out. But I waited, from instinct, or perhaps from natural caution, to hear first all that she had yet to say ; and to her questioning eyes I made no answer, but to repeat dreamily, as though I had been thinking of no other thing,—

“ A year, and yet a month !—It is a long, long time to live, and not know one has lived ! A year and yet a month !—It is a long, long time to sleep ! ”

“ And so it is, dear Ellinore, a long, long time to sleep : so long, we feared that you would never wake. But tell me, in that sleep had you no dreams—dreams of some faces that were ever near

you, and that looked lovingly upon you?" And waiting for my answer, her eyes looked closely and curiously into mine.

Thus, called to my mind, the visions of my dreaming life came back. Two faces staid with me—as I recalled then to have seen them, in my poor dumb life, stay. And one—the patient, mother face, the face that from habit I had learned by heart—I had no need to seek; and turning to the dear, dear woman by my side, I kissed her face, and saying,—“This is one,” I kissed it yet again; and then I added, looking curiously in my turn,—“But, there is yet another.”

To this there was no answer save a little, tender smile, that was the sign of some sweet mystery yet unknown to me. “Come!” she said, with that sweet cheeriness that some souls have, who are so good they must be glad, if not for their own sake, for some other loving sake. “Come! you have played the game of ‘blindman’s buff’ so long, that I am sure you must be tired; and you will never know all that in your stumbling you have caught, unless we take the bandage from your eyes.” And with her arm about me, she drew me to a soft divan—touching the pillow to her mind—while she, low seated by my side, began gently to “take the bandage from my eyes.”

“The morning that *it* happened, dear, Ned and I were watching, from a window in his room, Georgine and Oscar,—”

At the name I started. The man was Oscar yet to her, and yet the lover of Georgine; not Marcus Pancho—my enemy, and the murderer of Georgine. Quick as a flash this revelation came to me; and with it, too, again the instinct, again the caution, to keep within my heart all that I knew; and with some light excuse to her, who at my start had paused in alarm, I prayed her to continue.

“We were watching Georgine and Oscar, who were slowly coming down the path. They looked so happy, that Ned and I took for our theme their happiness. Later, with the thought of going to your apartment, and as I turned to leave my son, we both heard a loud and dreadful shriek that brought us terrified upon the scene. You took no note of us; but wildly shrieking, kissed first, then beat upon the dead to call her back to life. We saw, with horror, Georgine dead, and you, poor soul, distraught. Oscar, with terror and with agony, stood like one dumb. When he could speak, he said that he and Georgine had found you in the library awaiting their return; that after introducing him to you, Georgine had left you alone with him; and that later, entering from the draw-

ing-room—at the very moment of her entrance—she had fallen, without a word, outstretched before you, dead; that going to her—our dead Georgine—you, with a wild shriek, thrust him back. That was all he said, and all he knew.”

Here I could keep silent no longer. “Is this all?” I said. “Did he tell you nothing more,—nothing?”

“My poor child, how could he tell us more? There was no more to tell. He knew already, as we, Ned and I, knew, that our poor Georgine had died as her mother died—of heart disease. I always knew, but you and Georgine never, that in her living she was close to death. With every way I knew to keep all sorrow from her life, I tried to fasten life to her with happiness. Oscar knew her danger. I had told him—that to the ardor of his loving he might add caution. Alas! he loved too well. She was too happy, our Georgine! For very joy her sweet life died. Do you remember her as she looked the evening Oscar came? The fever of emotion burned too warm upon her cheek, and joy flamed too brightly from her eyes. I trembled, even then, lest she was too happy. And it is true—she died of too much joy. And who knows but that it is better she died thus, than to have lived perhaps for sorrow, and to die of it?

We took her home, when all was over—all that you know nothing of—to lay her from our sight forever, in this world. Oscar, who was too heart-broken to remain where every sight of us reminded him of Georgine, went abroad, and then to Egypt, to India, every where, to divert his thoughts from the happiness of the past, that now it could no longer be his, the memory of it was unbearable. For the same reason he never wrote to us—fearing that we should write of her.

You, as I have said, knew nothing of the weeks of mournful living for the hearts that sorrowed for the dead. You spoke not, nor answered when we spoke to you. You never smiled, nor yet seemed sad. You saw, or seemed to see, only the things that were familiar, and of which the use in other days had grown a habit. You ate, and drank, and slept, from habit and necessity. Oh, how I prayed for the wisdom of some science that might wake you from the life that was so like death! But grief made me helpless for myself, and helpless then for you. My health, that never was robust, gave way; and to months of lingering fever, was added yet a long continued nervous malady. It was Ned, good, patient Ned, that watched me through days and nights of months that seemed unending in their weariness. And it was Ned that watched you,

too, through months of 'harmless madness—' for so the physicians named your malady.

As soon as my poor tired brain could think, I thought of you; and called to mind all that you had told me of the curious malady that unhappily was yours. And then I said, 'Perhaps she is not daft, our Ellinore—perhaps she is asleep. We will go abroad, to Paris, and to the physician famous there for his knowledge of such maladies, and know the truth!' And then, as if to help me in my groping way to walk straight to the truth, I took the journal up that held the printed lectures and experiments of our own great physician—that curious man who with a word, or sign, sends individuals to sleep, and while they are asleep, plays such tricks with their dumb obedience to his will, that make the staring lookers on believe him a magician; but who, smiling, will tell you it is the malady that makes him a magician, and not his will that makes the malady. Reading these lectures, as they were printed each day, I said, 'Of what use is it to go to Paris? We will go to New York, and to our own physician.'

He heard, this good physician, all I had to say; then bade you do a host of things—some wise, some foolish—which you did, all in the obedient, automatic way in which you had done, for months, the

small and necessary things that Ned and I had bidden you do. He asked you questions; then, (and perhaps it was through change of scene, that your malady had taken this transition) for the first time, you spoke. To every question you answered promptly—the answer that he in his mind had framed for you; an answer to his liking. Then to prove to us what a hypnotist may do without knowing that he has done anything, he hid some money in a cabinet in an adjoining room; and quick, at his suggestion, you believed the room a bank, the cabinet a safe, and forthwith committed a theft, with all the cunning and the caution of a thief. Again, at his dictation, you wrote out—with the severe correctness of your neat chirography—a slanderous, compromising charge against the pastor of a certain church, and promptly, as you were bidden, signed my name.

‘Enough!’ I cried, ‘I believe now all that I faintly hoped! She is not mad, our Ellinore, she is asleep! And now, good doctor, the remedy. You who understand thus the strange phenomena of this sleep, must know the way to make her wide awake.’

‘Ah,’ he answered, ‘that I can not do! Her’s is no ordinary case. She may, of herself, at any time, awake as one awakens from a natural sleep; if not,

the remedy is to bring back the scene, precisely as it was, that first produced the sleep."

From that time you answered when we spoke to you—but only the answers that we suggested to you by our silent wishing, or our spoken command; and in the hope that change of scene, of faces, and of things, might sooner bring about the hoped for wakening, we traveled. First we went to England. There Ned left us for a stay in Paris. But in his stead—first for my sake and for the memory of Georgine, and later for your own sake—you found a friend that never left us. It was then that hope first came to me. I fancied that in a vague way you recognized the watchful presence that was always near you when I was not with you; and that in the same vague way you felt the loving of this friend. For when he left you, there was in your face a faint appealing look, as if to chide me that he did not stay; and when he came, you looked contented—as well fed, well warm and cuddled infants look the happiness they can not speak, and scarcely know they feel.

For awhile we staid with him, this friend, in England. Then, again for your sake, we wandered to strange countries—you and I, and that dear friend, who loved you then for your own sake, and who had learned to love his own life but for your

sake. Never was heart of man so patient and so tender ! His time, his love, himself, and all that he had to give, he gladly gave to you, with no return but that dim, first knowing of his presence, that was his heaven. Once—when weary with watching we had come back to England—as he sat with trembling lip and paling brow, looking with troubled eyes into the calmness of your own, and holding your little, unresponsive hand in his, I heard him murmur,—

‘If there were no other way than by my dying, that she might awake to life ; then—if ere I go I might but tell her of my love, and hear her say, of her own will, ‘I love you—’ that dying would be happiness !’ Then, seeing me, he started up, and with the light of a new purpose flashing from his eyes, he cried,—

‘I shall wait no longer, aunt ! There is no growing of these—the first faint signs of recognition. The fact that we are always near her, makes a habit of our presence, that may help to lengthen yet the calm monotony of her life. The physician said, ‘She may, of herself, at any time, awake as one awakens from a natural sleep ; if not, the remedy is to bring back the scene, precisely as it was, that first produced the sleep.’ We have waited long enough for this—her own awakening ; we will try

the remedy. You, aunt, will write at once to Oscar Lyndhurst, urging him to come in greatest haste. Ned, at a word from you, will go to America, and to his ranch, in that far off valley in the West, and make the necessary preparations for our coming. Meanwhile,—’ and here his strong voice faltered, and his words were low—‘I will have a form and face of wax, fashioned as perfect as can be, of our beloved Georgine. This form will wear the same gown that Georgine wore on that day. You will dress our fair somnambulist, too, as she was dressed that day. With these, we can bring back the scene, the dreadful scene, to seem to be precisely as it was that day. If this fail—’ he paused; then with closed eyes, and bowing low his head, he murmured,—‘O God of Heaven! then pity me, and help me bear the pain of thinking what my life might be, with this beloved one to walk, all knowing and all loving, with me!’

Oscar had kept his word, not to write; and it was only through his lawyer that we learned where he might be, and where to write. Our letters would be slow, we knew, to find him in his wanderings, and that before his answer, he himself might come. But he came not, and still no answer to our letters came. And then the friend that loves you, wrote to Oscar; praying him, for love’s sake, to come.

‘Even as you,’ he wrote, ‘loved our Georgine, and now, grief stricken, are a wanderer for her sake; so I love Ellinore, and bear a sorrow for her sake. But gladly as we gave Georgine to your love, so, by your coming, you may give this loved one to my love.’ So he wrote, and for the answer Oscar himself came. The letter had found him in Algiers, so he said, and that the others we had written had not reached him in his restless wandering from place to place. And when he looked upon the face of him, the friend who loves you, he was glad, almost joyous—poor man! that he, who was so sad, might help to make those happy who had loved Georgine. We felt this, and pitied him for what he had to do—this that would bring back the keenness of his first pain. We knew the suffering that it cost him, when with feverish energy he said,—

‘Come! I am ready now to go with you! Let us bring back the scene without delay—if back it must be brought! This Ellinore, this friend who loved Georgine, has found a lover; and next to gladly hurrying to my love—were she yet in this world to love—I would gladly hurry to this Ellinore, to waken her, that she may know her lover and her love!’

You know the rest now, dear,—that what you remember was the semblance only of the scene

of horror; a semblance that brought back to you the dreadful sense of living to where it had left you thirteen months ago. You saw us, recognized us—Ned and me; and then we led you to your room, as you remember, and drugged you to a peaceful sleep, from which you awoke, just now, to healthful life; to know at last how much we love you, Ellinore—we who have so long loved you without your knowing.”

“Dear heart!” I cried, and soft-caressed the cheek that I drew down to mine. “Dear heart, so patient and so true! that much loving has long waited for the love my dumb existence knew not how to give, but which at last I give, as daughter to a faithful mother gives, and gladly gives! Dear hands!” I cried, and kissed the tender hands that lay in mine. “Hands that have done so much for me—who like a feeble child have done nothing for myself!——”

Here was a pause, then my sudden asking,—

“Where is Oscar Lyndhurst? Did he not tell you something more of himself—something that you have not yet told me? Did he tell you nothing more of Georgine—nothing more of me?” And my eyes looked searchingly into hers.

“Nothing more, dear. He said that he had told us all he knew; and after that we could not bear

to give him pain by speaking of it. You must not think it strange that he has gone away without seeing you. He dreaded your questioning of that dreadful hour and of Georgine. The bringing back of the sad scene was more than he could bear. He would not stay a moment longer, when his part was done, but went away, 'to come again,' he said, 'some other time, to look upon the happiness of her who loved Georgine.' Poor Oscar! the sad rehearsal that brought you back to life and love, could not bring back Georgine; and in its dreadful troubling of her memory, it brought him only pain."

When she had thus spoken, we both were silent, with no sound to break the silence but the loud pulsations of our waiting hearts—her heart that waited for the question that her woman's wisdom knew I soon would ask; and mine that waited yet to think upon the strange recital.

What had caused my long, strange sleep? Had Marcus by a means provided and foreseen, produced it at the moment most propitious, that within the shadow of my dumbness and my silence he might hide until, with some new invention of his cunning, he might escape the hands of justice and of wrath? Or had my sleep been self-produced—a natural freak of my strange malady? No matter, it had served the purpose of my foe beyond all that

he could have wished or hoped for. His long absence and his silence, proved to me the purpose of his mind; that if he alone were wanting to bring back the scene that was to bring me back to waking life, my sleep would have had the length best suited to his liking. And well I knew why he had changed his mind, why at last he came, and in gladness came, and what was the meaning of his words, "I am ready now to go with you. This Ellinore, this friend that loved Georgine, has found a lover; and next to gladly hurrying to my love—were she yet in this world to love—I would gladly hurry to this Ellinore, to waken her, that she may know her lover and her love." Had he not said to me—with the last dreadful words I had heard him say—that he had waited for my loving only to take that love from me? And now the time had come when he might hope for that revenge—that which he meant to be his "supreme revenge." He was even now waiting to enjoy it; wherever he might be, I knew I could be sure of that. He had not staid to see my full awakening—and Mrs. Edmonds fancied it was for his sorrow's sake; but I knew he had fled believing I would tell the truth.

And would I tell it? Ought I to tell it? Whatever my future might be, would this dire revelation save me from the revenge of Marcus? I did not believe

it. On the contrary, it would increase his desire for revenge. And what good to those who had loved Georgine, would this revelation bring about? No good. But I knew it would bring a great sorrow—an agony of torture to them. “She died of too much joy,” her aunt had said; and I could see that she had nursed her pain to quietness by this thought. To tell her this was not the truth, and that her loved Georgine had died of a terrible sorrow—died of a broken heart; that she had died of a most cruel striking from the man she loved—died knowing that it was he who struck; to tell her this, was to bring a poignant and an irreparable sorrow to the hearts that had loved Georgine and that cherished the memory of her happy life. “No!” I said, within my heart, “I will not tell the dreadful truth until I must; and for the sake of others whom I love, whom Georgine loved, I pray it may forever be untold!” And then I asked the question that she who patient waiting by my side knew that I would ask,—

“And where is yet the other face that, like yours, staid and staid? That fair, kind *something*, that in my poor, dumb way I saw was so like her—that in my poor, dumb way I loved because it was something of Georgine? He must have loved me much, this friend, who staid through months of weary watching, of weary waiting, for my sake!”

And with these words a sweet and blissful hope new fluttered in my heart, and moved my lips into a tender smile.

And smiling back she left me, that dear woman; and when she came again, came not alone. A tall, proud presence came with her; a presence that was new—for I had only recollection of the face as I had seen it in my strange, sleepful days. And there it was again before me—the same fair face, the same sweet face. And now that I could see as others see, I saw a mouth of wondrous sweetness; eyes that were tender and were glad—these were Georgine's. The face itself was Georgine's own; but it was not a woman that stood before me—it was a man: it was not Georgine herself—it was the brother of Georgine.

He stood, and long I gazed into his eyes, till mine, bedimmed with tears, could no longer gaze: then reaching out my hand, he took it in his own, and, kneeling low before me, said no other words than these,—

“Ellinore, if knowing me, at last, then know me for thine own! Thine own to guard thee, cherish thee, but most of all to love thee, always, even as I have loved thee, for evermore!”

“My love! My love! This for my answer!”—And I drew his head close to my heart, and softly murmured, “God is good!”

This was our wooing; and with the sweetness of our first embrace, he gave me yet another—the kiss of our betrothal.

CHAPTER II.

So I awoke to the new life, whose sweetness had been born and nourished long without my knowing. I awoke to find myself, in the first hours of my awakening, the affianced wife of Courtney Ellerton. It was so strange and new; and yet, to me, it did not seem either strange or new. As I had loved Georgine, so I loved now her brother. In our happy, loving days, she had talked of Courtney until I knew him even as she knew him. And had I not loved him through all the slumbering days, when he so much loved me? True, as dreamers love the phantoms of their dreams, so I had loved him then. But as in that vague life I wedded my poor self to him, dependent on his presence for my little happiness, and dumbly troubled when he went away; so in my healthful life, my heart and soul were wedded yet to him. For now that I could see, and feel, and know, with all the keenness of a healthful life, I knew he held yet, and that he should forever hold, the power to make me happy by his presence and his love; and that should he

leave me, should he be taken from me, my life would take a grief that neither time nor any loving could assuage.

And would he be mine always—"to guard me, cherish me, love me?" Had not every good, every joy that I had ever known, when best loved, best enjoyed, been taken from me? True, other blessings, other joys had happily come instead. But this, the latest blessing that was mine; this, which to loving man and loving woman is the supremest happiness, the supremest good—should this be taken from me, I knew no happy life could spring again from deadness such as mine would be.

Alas! I held in the very fact that I was glad, the proof that I should sorrow. I learned to look upon my happiness as loaned to me. The thought that at any hour it might be taken from me, taught me to measure each experience by the fulness of its sweet; so each minute was a little world in which I lived enchanted.

We lived much, loved much in that happy time; until there was but one short month to bring my wedding-day.

* * * * *

What are these? Tears! And then I am not dead—though buried, not yet dead! Tears at the memory of the happy times so far, so far from me!

And misery, and solitude, and—oh God! madness—if not yet for me, for others about me, near to me! Ah well, let me weep! It is not for myself, as I am now, but for that other self, of whom I write. And here, with my tears, let me ask the pity, let me ask the tears of those who were, of those who now are, happy brides; brides who happily waited for the wedding-day, that came with blessings and with gladness from Heaven and from Earth—for mine, my wedding-day, came not.

It came not, for he came—my foe; and with a cruel sureness of the Devil's own, he took me from my love, my happiness—from all that was living, from all that was life.

It was when I was happiest. We had come to New York—Mrs. Edmonds, Courtney and I; and despite the fear that I kept close hidden to myself, I was gayly making ready for the wedding-day. Since the day of my awakening, no word had come to Mrs. Edmonds or Courtney from him they knew as Oscar Lyndhurst. Mrs. Edmonds, wondering, hoped that he would come; I, fearing, hoped not.

“For should he come,” I reasoned, “should he even write, then I will tell the story as it is. He shall not, with my knowing, be again allied to those I love. It would be enough to say—were he not here—and were he here, to point to him in saying,

‘That is Marcus Pancho! That is my foe! And this I knew and Georgine knew, that last hour of our knowing—the hour that took her life from her, and left me living like one daft.’ This would be enough to set the hearts of those I love bleeding with a frightful wound; this would be enough to fill the measure of their vengeance against the man I fear and hate. But their suffering would be my pain; and in their vengeance what evil might come to my lover and my friend—what greater evil yet to me? So for the sake of these beloved ones, and for my own sake, I hope that he they know as Oscar Lyndhurst, will not come.”

However, my fear that he might come, my dread of some sudden, frightful intrusion of his presence; this fear, this dread, was bounded by a sense of safety, from the fact that I was never left alone. “No sudden, dreadful sight, no excess of emotion, no abruptness in anything; but a tranquil life, a happy life—repose for the mind, content for the heart!” This is what the wise and good physician had said, when questioned how to make my malady a harmless one, and in the end to make of it not one. So from this suggestion, and from the habit—that was carried with them from their watching of my helpless life—Mrs. Edmonds and Courtney, sometimes one of them, sometimes both of them, staid continually with me.

But where is the mortal that will go straight on in a well chosen way without once turning from it? Who that is wisest is always wise? Who that is any one thing is always that one thing.

Once, only once, the two who loved me went away. Had they not gone, would I now be buried here from love, from life? Who knows? The Devil is not poor in ways to do his liking!

They had been gone one night, and before noon of the day that followed, they were to have been with me. Their going was for my sake; this they had whispered in kissing me good-bye. "A little secret," they said, that they should for a time keep from me. These "little secrets" were not new to me; and I had always found them out when suddenly I looked upon some rare gift, or when some sweet surprise was made known to me.

Before I had time to wonder why they did not come, a letter came, with loving words enough to give me courage yet to wait another night, and still another day for their return. I did not feel a moment's pang for the delay that gave me that dear letter. I have it now—here, where I placed it then, warmed with the poor warmth of my poor heart—that first and only letter, his written words of love—all that I have left now of his love.

I was lonely. We were in the city for so short

a time, we had not brought with us the solace of a maid—whose presence might have saved me for that time. The day was perfect, as a perfect day can be in the fair month of September. I could not cheat my longing for a walk; and so I started out among a little world of people, some whom I had known well in other days, but who—close veiled as I was—could not know me. I walked up the avenue, once so familiar, and coming back turned into a street, which I traversed; and crossing yet another avenue, and half way of another street—that led into a little park to which I meant to go—I paused, as to my ear came the sudden cry of,—

“Ellinore!”

It was a woman's voice, and with the sound quick flashed the thought that I had heard the voice some other where, and at some other time. It was but a fancy; for when I turned to look, I saw no one that I had known. It was a Sister that I saw, in the garb and bonnet of a Sister, and with the veil close drawn about her face. Beside her stood a man. “Poor thing!” he said, and gazed at me with a look of real, or feigned pity. “Here she is!” he added, pointing then at me, as sudden from his hiding came a man, at the sight of whom I cried aloud and started back; while he—a fiend it seemed to me, with massive frame, with shining florid face,

with strangely cold and gleaming eyes—with a giant arm encircled me, while one huge hand of deadly whiteness closed upon my mouth.

And there, without another word, in that well-governed city, in full day, with people hurrying by; there, with but one answer to the few who stopped to know the reason of my struggling and my stifled cry; a silent answer, that seemed to quickly satisfy those who read it from the paper held to them by him who with one cruel hand held me; for as they read, their chivalrous souls dissolved in one last look, half curious, half of pity, and then—they ran away: there, in that *well governed city*! I was rudely seized by those I did not know, who did not know me, gagged, and placed within a carriage. The carriage rolled, it seemed to me—for a bandage had been put upon my eyes—for endless moments on, and on; then stopping, I was led up step by step into a door that opened without ringing; and then again up stairs and stairs, and through another doorway—and then the bandage was taken from my eyes.

I heard a stealthy step, a muffled click of closing lock, and I was left alone in darkness; the deep and awful darkness of a rayless night—although I knew without it was bright day.

I groped about the room, and from the soft and sinking carpet came no echoing answer to my tread.

It was, I thought, a middle chamber; as upon three sides my fingers touched the wall and glided over muffled doors; the fourth, as far as I could reach, was covered with a padded cloth. Listening, I heard no sound of any living thing; and stumbling noiselessly into a chair, I tried to think.

I had not seen my foe—he who had always been himself the herald of the ill he meant to bring. But well I knew, without his presence, that this ill was of his bringing, and that somewhere within the shadow of the shameful scene he sat, and pushed the actors on. I was sure that Marcus Pancho did not mean to take from me my life; that would be to take from him the power to torture it. The boldness of the outrage, the outrage itself, took away my fear. My foe had done at last a deed for which the law could punish. I had only to wait the return of Mrs. Edmonds and Courtney. The quick perception of the first, would tell her that Marcus Pancho had done whatever of evil had been done to me; the wisdom of the second, would tell him what to do. The affection of the one, the love of the other, the wealth and the influence of both—all this, in thinking upon it, assured me that in seeking me, they would never cease to seek until they had found me; and in finding me, find the means to rid me effectually of my foe. Again, should Marcus

try once more to make some dreadful use of my malady, the two who loved me knew as well as I, what, in my sleep I could be made to do.

So I reasoned, with a strong resolve to feel no foolish fear, to keep my nerves in quiet, and to resist, with my own will, the will that might oppose. And how much, if at all, this mental fortifying had to do with the hypnotic phenomena that followed, I do not know; but, whereas in all other results—either induced or spontaneous—I have no remembrance of the means that were employed to produce that sleep, nor what occurred during that sleep—except at the latter end of my long trance, when I was already in a transition period preparatory to my complete awakening, and of which my remembrance is simply a vague impression of what was the truth—of this experience which I am about to relate, and which was not a fancy, but an actual experience; an experience that I leave to the investigation, and the explanation if possible, of men of science—of this experience I have a distinct remembrance as it then appeared to me.

Sitting there in the thick darkness, I saw suddenly before me what seemed, in the wizardry of my sight, to be a legion of flaming, dancing fiends, that like the pictures of a kaleidoscope passed, and left before my gaze a giant—whose eyes were first

flaming balls of fire, then burning rings, and then huge prisms of changing hues. The face of this giant seemed a fiery, mocking thing; the hands were shapeless lumps of whiteness reaching out to me—and yet I knew the giant was a man.

So I was not unconscious. On the contrary, I seemed to possess a double consciousness. Besides myself, there seemed of that self a duplicate. My thinking self seemed idly watching another acting self. Something was put in the hand of this copy of myself, that seemed to it a huge, unwieldy club; yet I, my own self, knew it was a pen. Again, before this foolish self, was laid a stretch of something that was one-half white; the other half was striped in zigzag lines of black. I had no mind to touch this something that my grotesque self was handling, and that I seemed to see how it must feel—the surface rough, the zigzag lines like blunt saws of crinkled parchment: and yet, my wiser self knew that before me lay one smooth, unwritten sheet of paper, and another written sheet. And more;—*I read the written sheet from end to end, knowing the import of each word.*

Then, as from a distance, I heard a voice give a command—and I knew it was to write. And although, in seeing that my duplicate self was going to obey, I knew it was about to do a foolish thing,

a thing that were I in its stead I should not do ; yet I did not interfere with the doing, nor do I remember to have desired to do so. I felt no emotion either of wonder or of fear. It has seemed to me since, in recalling my impressions, that my superior self was interested only as an observer of the other inferior self ; and that while reasoning and thinking in a contrary way, I knew perfectly well what was in the mind of the self that was foolishly acting.

At this stage of the phenomena I must have fallen into a state of complete unconsciousness ; as I have no remembrance of the interval that followed, until the moment I was aroused—perhaps by artificial means—when I heard a soft footstep, and the closing of a door, as though some one were leaving the room. I remember to have drowsily thought it was Mrs. Edmonds that had passed through my room. In moving upon my bed I felt a painful weariness ; and opening my eyes, my mind was in the dazed condition of him who has traveled a long distance, and who arriving at his destination at night, is surprised when first awakening to find himself in a strange place, and not at home ; and who for the moment has no recollection of his journey, or even that he had left his home. I felt also the continuous, swaying motion, accompanied by a slight ver-

tigo and nausea—that I had always felt after having traveled many hours in a steamboat or sleeping-car; and closing my eyes again, I lay quite still, to alleviate the unpleasant effect. Gradually, in reasoning why I was there, and not in my own room, and how I came there, I recalled all that had taken place to the time of the somnambulistic phenomena—these, the fact of the hypnotic sleep, and the curious effects produced upon my mind, I did not, at that time, at all remember; they were distinctly recalled later.

Sitting upright in my bed, I perceived that I yet wore my walking dress; it having been simply loosened, in order, I suppose, to secure me a more comfortable repose. Instinctively I touched my neck; the chain, that held my mother's locket, was still there. Then again searching close to my heart, where I had placed it, I found the letter—Courtney's. Kissing it, tears blinded my eyes in thinking that it was a letter, only, and not Courtney that I might caress.

The room was dimly lighted, and my first impression was that I was still within the room where I had been left in darkness, and that the dazed and dizzy feeling was the effect of some narcotic which, in some way, without my knowing, had been given to me. Looking straight before me, my eyes rested

upon an open letter that lay upon a table. Quitting my bed with difficulty—for I was aching in every part of my body—I took it up, thinking it had been left for me. It was a letter to Courtney Ellerton, in my own handwriting, carefully written, and signed with my name.

I read it from the beginning to the end. Then, with a cry of pain, I asked myself what the letter meant? Where had I seen it—for I remembered vaguely to have seen it? Why had I written it? What means had been employed to make me write it? And then, all at once, in the light of a sudden flaming from the past, I saw all that—in the shadow of the unconscious hours that followed—I had forgotten I had seen; and I recalled distinctly everything that had occurred, as I have related it. I understood then, the meaning of the phantasmagoria that had passed before my sight. The flaming fiends that had danced before me, were the sudden and successive flashing of vivid electric sparks—the means employed to bring about my curious sleep; the fantastic shapes that the witchery of my vision saw, were the giant form, the gleaming eyes, the dreadful florid face, the dead white hands of him who had seized me, gagged me, placed me in a carriage, and had brought me to a room of darkness as of night. I knew, too, that my poor self,

my automatic self, had copied out the letter as I saw it now before me; and that the other self that looked upon it, following every word with a sort of painless pity for the weak self that wrote, was but that consciousness of right, that, in correct souls, even through a witless slumber, does not wholly sleep.

“DEAR MRS. EDMONDS, AND DEAR COURTNEY:—

So I call you yet, for yet you are most dear to me—save one yet dearer, for whose sake I leave you. Courtney, I do not ask your pardon or your pity. I know too well the grossness of what will seem to you my long deceit, that will not let you pardon—the deceit that for your precious gifts of care and watching, feigned to give you love such as you gave; the deceit that wore your love, as if a blessing, to the last, then left it as though it were of no worth. You will not pardon—no heart of mortal would. Your pity you will need more for yourself. Do I need pity, think you—I, who leaving royal offerings from a love like yours, could only leave it knowing that offerings still more royal, in my sight, from another’s loving, would be mine?

“I have not known you long, Courtney, and yet so well I know you—and that dear friend—that I know at first you will not believe, will not think of believing, that I am false, that I have been false—

false to you both. Yes, long before Georgine loved Oscar Lyndhurst, he loved me. I loved him, too. But once we quarrelled; and lest he should think I loved him yet, I denied that I had loved him. I was still too proud to let the world know I had ever loved, or that I had been loved—that is why you, dear Mrs. Edmonds, and Georgine never knew. You will understand, now, why in those days of Georgine's loving, I was so suffering and so sad. Ah, those dreadful days! They told me only of the lover of Georgine; of him who once had been my lover; of him whom I yet loved, but who could not now love me, who must never more love me. Alas, it was true! I was loving him more than I had ever loved him—now that I knew he was no longer free, and that he had gone forever from me. I loved him with a mad fervor that made my days a torture and my nights a hell. While Oscar had not even told Georgine—when she had talked of me—that he knew me, that he had once loved me; while that he promised for her sweet sake, Georgine's, to be a friend to me—so much he wished, in his indifference, to punish my long-ago and much repented of indifference to him. He meant to see me, to greet me as a stranger,—so I thought, and kept his secret; trying always to 'make my heart as a millstone,' and to 'set my face as a flint,' that

I might meet him in the coldness of his pride—as cold as he, as proud.

“You remember the night he came, that I was too ill to see him. And you will know now, dear friend, that my illness was but the natural weakness of my poor coward heart. It was only the next morning, at the latest hour, that I was brave enough to leave my room. It was in the library, as I sat alone, that he came to me. Georgine was not with him. And then, even then, the weakness of my heart came back, as I saw, with wonder, the stern sadness of his gaze; and it was through tears that I blessed him as the lover of Georgine. But he, seeing my trouble, reading my love, with trembling voice and passionate words confessed that he yet loved me, and loved but me; and that he had never ceased to love me; but that in the belief that I had never loved him—as in my anger I had once declared—he had met Georgine, and had sought her love, because she so loved me; as I was dearest to her, as her friend, so he had hoped yet to be dear, as a friend, to me. Surprised that I had neither spoken to Georgine of him, nor had told her that I knew him of whom she wrote, he resolved to keep his knowing me a secret, until he should learn the reason of my silence and my secrecy. But now that he had seen me, now that

he knew the truth—that I loved him even as he loved me—he would tell Georgine, he would tell you—for he could never call another his wife, knowing that I loved him, that I might yet be his. And then, before I could think what I must say and do, he—forgetting the vows that bound him to another, forgetting our Georgine, forgetting all but me—he clasped me to his heart, and cried in passionate tones,—‘My love! My love!—My Ellinore!’ And then the curtains parted, then we saw Georgine, and then—God knows!—we could not then undo what the madness of one brief moment’s loving had done! You know the rest—the shock killed her, Georgine; and in the horror of that dying, my living, happily, was made dumb.

“Happily, I say, for seeing that you could not call me back to conscious life, Oscar, in his pity, helped you to believe that which your reason seized upon as true—that our Georgine had died of too much happiness. And—Heaven knows! that I too kept the secret, from the hour of my awakening, for your sake; and that in taking the rich gift of Courtney’s love, it was for Georgine’s sake—that I might put away all hope of being Oscar Lyndhurst’s wife. I believed that Oscar was of my mind, and that he had gone away because he could not, in his deep remorse, bear to look upon my

face; and that he came again, with joy, to bring me back to life, and to another love than his, that in the pain of his great sacrifice he might, as I was doing, do penance. His going yet again, without one word from me, his silence—this confirmed all that I believed; and so I said,— ‘He suffers to avenge the dead: the wrong was mine as well as his—I too will suffer.’

“Alas! I did not know the weakness of my will, nor half the strength of my mad love. No more did Oscar know the weakness of his will, nor yet the passion of his love. You went away, you and Courtney. By chance I saw him—him whom from childhood I had loved. The rest is only that he loves me yet as he has always loved me—even as I love him. A love too overpowering in its sweetness and its charm, now that we have met, to lose again, to lose forever, in the parting that must be, to make me your wife, Courtney. Love or Duty—and a moment to decide. Love decided—so we went her way.

“I know what you will say, dear Mrs. Edmonds, in thinking over all that I said in my gratitude to you for your tender mother care; of the gladness and the content I looked while I believed myself to be the wife of Courtney. You will say it is not true—this that I now write; and that in

my full sense I would not write it. You, knowing all that I have told you of Marcus Pancho, and all that he might, without my knowing, make me do, you will say that he came, and that the sudden shock at sight of him has made me daft again, and that I am again his victim. Not even the witnesses that saw me come to my room with Oscar, and go away again with him; not the servant who saw me choose the linen and the gowns, and some little things, and things essential to my toilette, that I took with me; not these witnesses, nor anything, will turn you from the fixed opinion you will hold as true. 'She did it in her sleep,' you will say, 'all that she has done; as she did foolish things for Doctor H——; and as she still, at that physician's bidding, wrote a letter of abuse against a pastor, well-reputed for his honest goodness and his simple faith; so, at the bidding of her foe, she has written this letter.'

Thus you will reason, and despite of thinking of some things that might seem curious in the past; of the questions that I asked in wonder, after my awakening; of Oscar's continued absence and continued silence; from all these—of which, now that you are set to thinking, you might think of in a different way from the way that you have thought—from these, the whisperings that will come to

warn you, you will turn, every time they come, back to the good you know of me, back to the faith you have in me; and still your woman's love and goodness will trust on. So, too, your faith in Oscar will be strong to help you in your search for Marcus Pancho—for you will not believe, not for one moment, that the man of whom I write is Oscar Lyndhurst, nor that I who write am Ellinore, until you see us both together—him with me. So, with your woman's faith and woman's will, you will seek, with Courtney—who, though less believing and less hopeful, will yet believe through you, yet hope through you—first Oscar, whom when found, your search, poor woman, will end where you had hoped it would begin. Till then—until you find Oscar, and so find me—dear Mrs. Edmonds, dear Courtney, you will see no more of her who will seem to you your most ungrateful, but who is—save in her greater love for Oscar—your most loving and most grateful,

“ELLINORE.”

This was the letter that I, my curious, automatic self, had copied from a letter that Marcus had written for me; that I had copied twice—first for them, my loved ones, to whom doubtless it had been sent; then for myself, that I might read all that I had dumbly written. Alas! What in my blindness

had I done against myself and those who loved me ! For in keeping the secret for their sakes, I gave my foe the text from which he wrote this letter. All that had happened—my sadness in the days of Georgine's loving; my illness when he, whom they believed her lover, came; the questions that I wondering asked after my awakening; all these, would be but proofs that I was dumbly making ready for those who loved me to believe me false. This was a letter of a devil, and not a letter of a man. Written with the subtle fineness of him who knew best how to word the knowledge that he held, to make his falsehoods look like truth; whose cunning framed each phrase to make it read like mine; whose fiendish wisdom had omitted nothing from what he had framed, to furnish to those who loved me the proof that I had foully wronged them, and could in this shameful manner write it out.

What then could I still count upon, to have no fear that those I loved would leave me to a hapless or uncertain fate? What, but the certitude within my heart that they, too, loved me with a sovereign faith in my affection and my truth? The surety in my mind that she who knew the deadly malice of my foe, and who had seen the freaks of my malady, would, with a woman's fineness, see beyond what seemed to be the truth, and with her woman's

faith would still trust on until she had found me, and from my own lips should know the truth? I had no thought to judge my lover and my friend other than I would have them, were I in their stead, judge me. And so, still without fear, I trusted, believing they would come.

CHAPTER III.

Where was I? No one came; but some one had been there, for in my drowsy wakening I had heard soft footsteps. What time was it? My watch was lying on a dressing-bureau; the time was morning, the hour eleven. A calendar turned to the day and date, told me it was Thursday, and the last day of September. It was Wednesday I had taken the walk that had brought me here. Since then it had been night, and now it was morning.

Going to the window—there was but one—I raised the shade that I might have more light; and started back in terror and in dread. I was looking through a lattice of iron wire, that was fastened securely on the four sides by iron bands. This wire lattice could be opened—for the window on the other side of it was open—but now it was locked, and the key was not there. Outside of the window—which was of thick glass—there were heavy zig-zag bars of iron, fastened together, every inch, by solid iron clamps. No human being could enter my room from without.

The building that I saw through this doubly grated window, was in the shape of the letter U. I was in a corner room of the end of this U, from which I could see the whole of one side of the building, and a part of the other. Every where there were iron grated windows. At the other end—the end facing me—was a high wall, over which I could see only the sky beyond. This wall, with the three sides of the building, formed a large court, which was covered with faded, trodden down grass. There were some trees, whose falling leaves strewed the ground. There had been flowers, in the summer time, but they were all dead.

I saw people walking, but I heard no voices. That suggested the thought that I was in an asylum for the deaf and dumb. But why the heavy grated windows everywhere? And then came another thought that made the blood run cold within my veins. What if I were shut up in a mad-house? In terror then I looked about the room; and now that there was more light, I saw that it was neat and pretty: and in examining all that it contained, my heart again took courage.

It was true then, as the letter said, that I had gone—from the darkness of the room where they had brought me—sleep walking, back to my own room, and had taken “the linen and the gowns, some

little things, and things essential to my toilette." For a wardrobe in one corner held my gowns ; gowns for indoors only—as they were all soft of texture, and warm in color, or all white. That meant that I should have no need of dresses to go out. A chest of drawers contained the linen necessary to my wants, and sorted in each drawer with a woman's care. There were pictures about the room, and there were books—books of prose, and poetry, that might take months to read, and not tales with which to while away an hour. The one door of the room was of massive oak, and made no movement when I tried to shake it from its solid setting in the wall. I knew, without my trying—although I tried it—that it was securely locked.

"All this," I reasoned, "this, the comfort and the care, the minding of the little things to please the fancy and to divert the mind, means long imprisonment—not madness, and not death. To make me mad, they would not put me in a pleasant room, nor would they study how to please. To bring me death, they would not bring me comfort, that will help me live ! No ! not for madness, and not for death, is this which is at present my prison ; but for some other purpose, that will take yet time to hatch into a greater evil ; and in that time, what good may come to me—nay, must come, if my lover

and my friend be yet alive ! Then give me courage, God of Heaven ! help me but to wait—it may be long, it may be but for a little while—the coming of the loving ones I love !”

In thinking, I had thought aloud. But there was none to hear me—so I thought. And then I searched among the “little things,” to find the crewel and the needles ; which when I had found, I set about the pleasant work of knitting. For I meant to be busy, to help myself to cheerfulness, that Heaven, in answer to my prayer, might help me.

Presently I found that I was hungry. And, as if its near coming had by some unknown sympathy brought to my mind its need, my breakfast came,—an appetizing breakfast, neatly served and set before me. Without a sign the door had opened noiselessly, and she who entered might have taken—with the fear and wonder that she brought—all thought from me of what I had to eat and drink, but that the strange experiences of my life had taught my eyes to cease to wonder at strange people and strange sights. This was another strange sight—this gaunt and ugly woman, with manlike features and manlike height ; and whose large and brawny arm suggested a manlike force. Without a word, without a glance at me, she set the food before me—of which, and of service, there was

nothing lacking that I might demand—and turned to go.

“Do not go,” I said, clutching the strange, coarse gown she wore, “until you tell me where I am, what house this is, and where there is some other woman, or some other one, to tell me something of myself !”

The woman—that looked most like a man—seemed as if she doubted that I could know her meaning; then, for my answer, placed her manlike fingers to her ears, and then again upon her mouth, and slowly shook her head.

Had she taken me for an idiot? Of course I knew her meaning—she was deaf and dumb. And with an exultant cry I loosed my hold. The woman could not hear, and could not speak; the staring, silent people that I saw in the court below—they could not hear, and could not speak. My prison was no worse than I at first supposed—an asylum for poor mutes, a refuge for the deaf and dumb.

I had nothing then to do but wait; so I read, and wrought at worsteds, and knitted at my crewels, while the weeks, that made a month, went by. One day was like every day; and save the manlike woman, no other living thing came to my room. This woman kept the room in order, and provided all I might have asked for, without my asking. Morning, and noon, and evening, she brought each

day my food. And I worked, and prayed, and waited; and laid me down to sleep each night, with the hope that on the morrow they, for whom I waited, would come.

But when the weeks grew longer than a month, my waiting became more wearisome. Impatience, and then wonder why they came not, mingled largely with my hope; and then an unquiet longing to know something of the house that was my prison, that in that knowing I might perhaps find some other means, than waiting, to escape.

There was but one door to my room, and but one window; and to escape from my prison, I must go out through the one, or the other. The door was always locked; it locked of itself, when softly closed each time by the mute. And had I been a man, with the skill and force to make a way through the gratings of my window, the unfriendly eyes by day, the yet more unfriendly dogs by night, would make me still—in the court below—a prisoner, and perhaps a more unfortunate one. But when one is ready for the doing of a thing, the way to do it is more easily found.

Waiting, I found a way. It was evening, and the manlike woman had just entered my room with a tray containing a light supper,—dinner was always served at midday—when there was the sound of a

shrill whistle, followed by a piercing shriek. Then I made a discovery. The woman I had thought deaf and dumb, was not deaf; for, in response to the whistle, she hurriedly set down the tray, and as hurriedly went out. But not more quickly than I—who was now always on the alert—followed her, and placed between the door and the wall a soft, pliable substance—that I had made ready in anticipation of a like opportunity—that prevented the door from closing sufficiently to lock it; then waiting for the footsteps to die away, I opened the door and glided noiselessly out, intending only to look cautiously about, and then return.

My searching eyes rapidly took in the long and gloomy hall, with rooms on either side. I went towards the end of the hall nearest to me; on going the length of my room, I could go no further. A door barred my passage; and, as at my window, there was a wire netting on one side of the glass door, and thick iron bars on the other. The hall was long, and the other end of it seemed so far from me, that I hesitated, fearing discovery and some unknown punishment as the result. But it was only for a moment; then I steadily went on, softly turning the knob of each door—and every one was locked—to the end. And again I could go no further. The thick glass door, that led out, was wire netted and iron bound like the other.

Then crouching down into the gloom of one corner, and with my face close to the grated door, trembling, I waited. The discovery of my close imprisonment, outside of the room that was my prison, was an alarming one. What was the meaning of the grated windows I had seen every where in looking from my window? What was the meaning of these grated doors? Whose was the piercing shriek that had taken, in haste, the manlike woman from my room? And in this rapid questioning, the terror, I had once felt at the thought that I was shut up in a madhouse,—with a new and dreadful force came back.

I could see through the grating into another hall—as far as the view was unrestricted by the grating; and still waiting, not knowing why I waited, I heard a noise as of scuffling feet, and then a shriek, and the sound of voices to the left of the hall where I could not see, and at some distance yet from me—for I could not at first distinguish the words; but the noise and the voices becoming more and more distinct, I concluded they were approaching in the direction where I was. All fear of being discovered had vanished in my terror of the suspicion where I was; and breathless and rooted to the spot, listening, I still waited.

On they came, the scuffling feet and voices, until

I could distinguish one—a woman's voice. Then, from the right of the corridor—into which, unseen myself, I was seeing—I heard footsteps rapidly approaching; and then a form sped by, a form I knew—the form of him who had seized me, gagged me, and placed me in a carriage.

“Do not put her there!” he cried, in a dreadful voice. “Come this way!”

At the sight of him who had spoken, the woman's voice grew louder; and what she said then, I knew was said to him.

“Ah! At last I see you—you, the master demon of a horde of demons, who for the money that you get, know how to make us mad!”

Then they came in sight. The woman—who was still young, although her hair was white, and whose face, even through its ghastly pallor, was a comely one—was led, or rather dragged, by the manlike creature that was my attendant, and by another, that was more like a ghoul than man or woman. The florid faced man—him I knew, and to whom the woman had spoken—then bade them stop; and while they waited, in doubt of something, or in conference, the woman still talked on.

“Ah! you are going to put me in the ‘dangerous ward!’ Me! although I came to you—you, the so-called ‘christian gentleman,’ the ‘honored head’ of

this 'well reputed and humane retreat—' believing that you, in your skill and kindness, might cure the sickness of my nerves—not madness. You are going to put me in the 'dangerous ward—' although, despite your 'treatment' you see I am not mad! To-morrow, my brother will come. I heard you—when last he came—name the day and hour when he should come. I heard you, too—when he begged to see me, promising not to speak, nor to listen should I speak—I heard you, in your soft and silken voice, persuade him to go away without a sight of me, without a word from me, lest he should—as you said—'undo the good' that you had done for me. He went away—poor man! believing that when he will come again, I shall be 'cured,' and will return with him. But you will cheat him of this happiness; you, pointing to me, will show me from this dreadful ward—this ward that means incurable. And could I be calm, in begging him, for all pity's sake, to take me away with him; you, with a look of feigned pity for him and for me, would say,—'This is at times a form of her madness: they all say thus—'I am not mad!'' But you will not let me have this chance of calmness! You will use your hellish tortures and your drugs, to serve your purpose—that, for the time my brother looks upon me, I shall indeed be mad! Ah well! Kill my body—you cannot kill the soul!"

This the woman shrieked, as—the conference ended—they opened wide an iron grated door, and dragged their victim in.

Was the wretched woman sane, as she believed herself, or was she crazy? I know not. I only know she was,—poor soul! like me—a woman.

“Do your duty!” said the voice of dreadful softness; and with a look of tigerish fierceness he strode back, past me, whence he had come.

And still my eyes were fastened to the horror that went on, so close, I heard the woman’s gasping breath and broken words of prayer. And then I saw the manlike woman and the other monster, lift their victim up—one at the head, the other at the feet—high up, then loose their hold; while she, this gentle, suffering woman, fell heavily to the floor. Alas! that for the curse of sin, devils must walk the earth abroad with men and women!

I started up and clutched the grating. I, a feeble and an imprisoned woman, what could I do by crying out—but bring perhaps upon myself the torture that I could not take from another?

“Had she swooned?” They were not certain; and so they *walked* upon her—those ghouls—until a crimson flow made ghastlier yet the pallid face beneath them. The woman made no sound, nor tried to wipe away the warm blood staining. So they knew she was unconscious.

Then I saw a curious thing; a crib—for all I know it might have been a coffin—whose four sides and top were of strongly netted wire. It was a cage. A cage, and not for beasts—but for a woman; for I saw them raise one side, and put her in—their unconscious victim—then hinge and lock the dreadful box. I saw this, and then, with a loud cry of horror, I fled like one distraught to seek my room.

But wildly as I sped the gloomy corridor, steps followed faster—bounds, not steps—until I felt upon my neck and cheek the heated breath of the beastlike man and woman. And then their dreadful grasp was laid on me; I was borne into my room and laid upon my bed; something was put on me that held me down without the power to move; a funnel was placed within my mouth, through which an acrid liquor flowed, burning my throat; and deadly narcotics—so I now believe—were given to me through punctures in the skin; my brain was wild, my thoughts became confused, my tongue seemed a ponderous lump that made no other than a mumbling sound. But I knew yet all that was doing, all that had been done; and through the nightmare of terror and the dazing consciousness, I struggled with a mighty will against the influence of the drugs, and against the dread unconsciousness—that in this hour of terror my malady might bring about.

Was it indeed the efforts of my will, or was it the presence of a pitying Angel, that kept me from the peril of a long unconsciousness within this dreadful place? Both, let me believe—and others, if they will—Heaven alone can know.

The demons had not yet finished to their liking, when one came. Could it be a friend—I knew enough to reason? No; for it was one whom I had seen; one who was an enemy—one who had helped to take me, on that fatal day, from life and happiness, to bring me here to mystery and pain. It was the Sister—black-robed and silent, and wearing yet the Sister's bonnet. The lamp was faintly burning; and, in the shadow of the woman's bonnet, I could not see a feature of her face. In a whispering voice she said some words, and then the *thing* that held me down, was taken away. With her hand she made a movement, and the two monsters, scowling, went from our presence out. Then a draught was held to my burning lips; a draught I knew was meant to soothe me, and to undo the ill that had been done to me, so I took it—too weary and too suffering to be curious. Then I closed my eyes; and when I opened them, perhaps hours later—for I took no note of time—my fevered brain was quiet, and my tongue had lost its numbness, so that I could speak. But with my first

words, the black robed woman made a sign that hushed my questioning; and then she gave me yet another potion—a soothing one; for I closed my eyes and drifted to a long and pleasant sleep.

When I awoke the morning light was shining—as best it could, through my poor blinded window. She was still there, close by my side—the silent, black robed woman. For it was she, although she was not wearing then the Sister's gown and bonnet. But, instead, she wore a loose, black gown, tied with a heavy cord about the waist. The hood—a part of the gown—was close drawn about the face, all but the forehead—which was covered low with bands of dark grey hair. The eyes I saw only through colored glasses.

A fear was still upon me—the dread, ungovernable fear that came while from behind the grated door I had looked upon the scene of horror. A fear for the present—for myself; a fear of torture, of madness, a fear of fear itself. A fear, the like of which, for every human heart upon this earth of things to fear, there is no other has so much of terror—the fear of a sane and thinking soul that find himself imprisoned in a mad-house.

Who was the woman sitting there, so strangely clad, so sombre, so mysterious? And whispering—for the silence all about me had taught me caution—I cried,—

"Woman,—for you are a woman, and so must have, at times, a woman's heart—have pity! Oh, for the pity of the pitying Christ for you, for all of us—have pity! You who have helped to bring me here, must know I am not mad; and that to hold me is a crime—a crime with which you charge your soul too heavily, to answer for it to the Great Judge that after this poor life will judge you! Help me to escape! You, too, escape with me! You can not want to live in this most dreadful place! Let me out of this—this mad-house! I have money, and others whom I love have money—we will give the half to you; we—"

"Hush!" she said, still in a whisper. "Do not talk again like this to me! I am not your friend—although in your late experience I may have seemed to be. Do not talk like this to others whom you may chance to see; lest you be treated as she was treated—the woman you saw put in the iron crib. You can not of yourself escape. They whom you saw believe you mad, but harmless—as you seemed to be through all the weeks before you left your room. You were not wise to leave your room; to make discoveries; to lose your natural coolness and your calm—all this, that made them think you were no longer 'harmless;' so they treated you as they treat others whom they find ungovernable. Be quiet; take no note, or seem to take no note, of

anything; and ask no questions. This is your only safety; this your sole security that you may live on undisturbed in this your room—your prison.”

She did not wait to hear what I might say, but glided from the room, and left me. She was not my friend—so she had said; and in her cold and silent presence there was no sign of friendliness; nor was there pity in the words of counsel she had given to me. And yet I felt that in some vague way, perhaps without her knowing, she was my friend; and my fear had less of terror. I again took courage from my reasoning: that the comforts of my room, the care for my body and my mind; the desire to keep from me all knowledge of the place wherein I was imprisoned; the silent woman's care and then her counsel—all these were proofs that they who placed me here had done it for another purpose than to bring me madness, or to bring me death. The woman knew that I was sane. She was but the instrument to do—and perhaps blindly to do—the will of others. But who could tell what time might do to turn her heart to pity and to make of her my friend? “And while I live,” I murmured, “I shall hope, nay, believe, that they who love me will yet find me. Should there come a time when I may no more hope this, no longer it believe, then I shall be no longer among the living—I shall be dead.”

CHAPTER IV.

She did not come again—the strange woman I had hoped to make my friend. Days, weeks, and months of awful silence and monotony went by, and she came not—and they whom I loved came not.

Where were they for whom I hoped and waited? Something had happened, something strange and dreadful, to keep them yet from me. “What! In this land of shrewd folk, where every man with native keenness scents out wrong; where journals send throughout the nation flaming tongues that show, in their light, deeds done in the darkness; when with no gain in money, and with no requital—save in the joy of duty done—a generous public hastens to find a strayed or a missing child; to hunt to justice, or to death, the gross betrayer of the humblest maid; when this, and more, the public does to avenge outrages and to right the wrong—shall not the two who love me do yet more? Aye! they will search and search in all the land, in every land, in each mysterious corner, in every cell of every asylum—until they find me!” So I kept saying to myself, and hoping, fearing, waited.

The black-gowned woman had told me to be calm, to take no note of what I saw about me, and to ask no questions. Of my own self I knew that she had wisely spoken, so I kept my face in quiet; and when the manlike woman came to serve me,—although I shivered with a sense of fear at each new sight of her—I dumbly stared as if I did not know that she was there. I knew she was not deaf, and I suspected she was not dumb; yet, Heaven knows, I was afraid to look a question lest I should hear her speak.

Where was the strange and sombre woman, that she came no more? Was she indeed a Sister? Or was she the matron of the asylum, perhaps the wife of the florid faced, the dead white handed man that kept my prison? Why had I never seen her face? Why only in whispers had I heard her voice? Alas! Of what use this, and all my questioning, that found no answer? She came not, but in her going she had left a good—the inside grating had been taken from my window; and I was nearer, a little nearer, the world without. And when at last the weary waiting brought a deep mournfulness that not books, nor crewels, nor faith, nor prayers, could banish from my mind, I stood—like other wretches, men on one side, women on the other, that I dimly saw through their double grating—

hour by hour for days and weeks, watching at my window.

This is how I found the one good that Heaven sent to me in that dread solitude. I saw a face, so gentle and so suffering, it helped me to more patience. The window, in which I saw it, was nearest to my own that I could see; and like mine, the inside grating had been taken away. The face—it was a man's—was pallid as the dead, and wasted. The lips were bloodless as the brow and cheek. The hair was long, and fell about his neck in waves of snowy whiteness. The eyes were large, and from their black and mournful lustre looked the little life that told me it was not a vision that I saw, but a living face. The form was tall, and wasted as the face—or so it seemed, wrapped in the long folds of a dressing-gown. His hands were small and white, and meekly crossed before him.

At the first sight of me he started back, as if in wonder and alarm; then his face seemed troubled, and in pain. But his first greeting was a smile—as if he feared to frighten me away; a smile so mournful and so sweet, I gave him back his greeting with a smile that must have looked to him as pitying, and as sad.

“He looks a king, captive and uncrowned, despoiled of all he called his own, and robbed of

every hope!" I murmured low, as steadily I gazed back at his long gazing—the while I wondered at his wonder, and his pain.

Where had I seen a face with something in it like that face—for there was something in it that I saw, that was not strange? Who was he? What was his history? Day by day I asked myself these questions, as day by day I stood at my window watching him who was always at his window—so it seemed to me—waiting to see me. For from some subtle sympathy—and more by the brightness that made shine the sombre blackness of his eyes at each new sight of me, and which with my going always faded out—I knew that the vision of my face had grown for him a thing to long for and to love. And more; I felt—explain the reason, you who can—that he whom I looked upon, this man of gentle bearing and of gentle face, was sane as I.

On mornings when the sun shone brightest, I could see within his room; and I saw that it was carpeted. A dressing-bureau, too, I saw, and an easy chair. And so I said, "His money, or the money paid for him, has given him the comforts that are needful to prolong his life for suffering, so that with his living they who keep him here may be enriched. Perhaps he has, like me, grown meek with wisdom, so that they who are about him may

known him, too, as “harmless,” and spare him the dreadful ‘treatment’ that must kill, or make one mad.”

But whoever he might be, whatever he might be, I knew—alas! he must have been shut up for long years, to look like that—so ghastly pale and shadowy. What if—oh Heaven! in the long category of dread suspicions and dread fears that had been, this suspicion and this fear, that came then, had not come;—what if, by some dire fate, my loving ones should never find me? What if the hellish cunning of my keeper, and of the devil who put me here, should find a way to keep me here? To live—oh God! how many years of suffering, and then to die, at last, within the four walls of my prison—the walls that seemed even then closing narrower for my tomb!

And then, as if to add to this new dread, I heard beneath my feet the sound of hammer and of saw. What was it to me, what they were doing below, above, or any where that was not in my prison? Yet I could not chase from my fevered brain the thoughts of other wretched prisoners who had heard the dreadful work go on outside their prison cell, that was for them the frightful herald of their death. I almost fancied I should see the scaffold rise before my window, as they had seen it rise for them—poor

wretches, doomed to hang thereon. For days and nights the sound went on that staid this dreadful fancy. And then it ceased; then some one came—the silent, black-gowned woman came, and led me through a door-way in my room—where I had not known there was a doorway—into another room.

It was a woman's room; and the fancy came to me that it was hers, the silent woman's; that she had lived there in that room, near me, without my knowing, perhaps to guard me and to care for me. She did not leave me now; and in my heart I wished that while I staid—if stay I must, in my one room—she too would stay with me.

But what was that? Again the sound of hammer and of saw! And not now beneath my feet, but nearer,—in my own room!

“What are they doing *here*, and what were they doing *there*?” I cried—still haunted by the hideous fancy of the scaffold—pointing first to my own room, then down, beneath my feet.

The woman gently forced me back to the seat from which I had risen. “Hush!” she said, in a low whisper, “I may not promise you safety, should they hear you talk. Try to be calm, that you may find again your courage. You will have need of it, to make ready; lest the sudden coming of an ill

may find you unprepared, and in the frenzy of your terror you may not seem to be harmless, and they whom you have seen, may think they have again a reason to serve you with a 'treatment' that will make much worse an evil that may come."

"They will not—oh God! they will not put me in an iron cage, like that—like that in which I saw them put the grey-haired woman! You will not let them do that to me—that thing so horrible! You will not—for you are a woman!"

Her hand, that lay upon my shoulder, trembled with a nervous start; and in my heart I felt the pity that she did not show.

"I can do nothing for you," she said, "but give you the same counsel that I once gave you: do not speak, and do not seem to see the strangeness of any thing that you will see. If you will heed me, you may be sure that in the place where you are going, no greater evil can come to you than in the place where you have been. Now, do not say another word; for every word may bring you nearer a real danger."

So I sat in mute and dreadful wonder, trying to "make ready," if not for the scaffold, for some other horror that was making ready—I knew now—for me.

The hammering ceased; the noise of moving

things—that had followed—the hurrying to and fro, ceased too. A whistle shrilly sounded; then was silence; then the mysterious woman led me back to my own room.

Where was my table? Where my easy chair? Where were the books? Where were the “little things” that were my own? My dressing-bureau was not there. The wardrobe door was open wide—the wardrobe empty!

“Woman!” I cried, in a loud whisper—that in my desperate fear had all the fierceness of a command—where have they taken all that was mine? Where are they going, now, to take me?”

Without a moment's waiting, she stooped down and took from before my bed an ample rug. Again she stooped, and touched another thing—a door, a trap-door—newly made, that opened up with hinges—and I looked into a chasm of awful blackness; while down, far down it seemed to me, a little burning trembled, like the far off shining of a star seen through the gloom of night.

“You lie!” I cried, in tones that would have been a shriek, but that in very terror I had lost my voice. “You said that in the place where I am going, no greater ill could come to me than in the place where I have been! It is a lie! Here, I can see a little of the light of day! Here, my

friends will come one day to seek me! But this, this yawning blackness—it is the passage to a tomb! A tomb where I may live—who knows—but live deep buried from all life, and from the reach of those who would bring me back to life!”

“Silence!” she whispered. “*Remember the iron cage!*” Then added, seeing that terror held me dumb; “I swear to you, that if you be quiet, no harm will come to you! Hark! Do not be afraid! she whispered low, as listening we heard the sound of footsteps that nearer came, and nearer. Then the door was opened, and I saw them once again—the florid faced, the dead white handed man; the manlike woman, and the other monster.

“Do not be afraid!” Alas! even then the mirror told me that my face was ashen white, while I felt a deadly faintness creep upon me. Yet I did not faint, nor cry aloud, nor make a sign of fear; not then, nor when they seized me, and bore me down a long and dismal stairway. I only closed my eyes, and prayed,—

“O God—my Father! Go with me where I am going! Help me, Lord! for now I know that where I shall be, no earthly help may come!”

This, my calmness—was the end of hope; this, my resignation—was despair.

That which had seemed to me to be the glimmer

of a star, grew larger and brighter as we came nearer to it. It was the light of a single lamp ; and when we reached the end of our descent, other lamps were lighted. Then they who had brought me here, went away—back by the uncertain stairway they had come—and I was left alone.

Despair had banished fear ; the death of hope, all curiosity. I was only vaguely thankful to be left alone. They had placed me upon a bed, and I felt that it was comfortable ; and completely exhausted I fell asleep. When I awoke, the manlike woman had brought my breakfast. It was yet warm, and I knew then that I had slept long, and that it was morning. I had already known that I was underground, from which there was no egress save by the stairway—that now I saw was but a ladder—down which they had brought me. Turning low the light of each lamp, I found there was no light of day—save a few feeble rays that struggled through small openings far above me, that had been left above ground for ventilation. The four sides of the room were of fresh, unpainted boards. It had not been the making of a scaffold I had heard, in hearing sound of hammer and of saw—it was the making of a tomb in which to bury me alive.

That was it. I knew it now, beyond a doubt. They meant to bury me away from all life, here,

where no one could find me; here, where those who would come to seek me, could not come. And that they might not find a trace to tell them where I had been, all that belonged to me, all that I had touched or looked upon in my old prison, had been taken away, and was now a part of my new prison.

However, when more than a week had passed away—a week that seemed a month—I found something in a drawer of my bureau that had not been there before: it was a large supply of paper and pencils. I am sure the mysterious woman put them there. “It is not,” I said, “from pity, this their fear I shall go mad. They mean that I shall know, with a full sense, all that I suffer while I live. Ah well! My life is not my own, that I may by my own hand hasten death. And here, within this tomb, no human thing if idly living could sanely live—and madness has too much of terror yet, for me to brave. So I will write; and in the pain of telling of the past, thus pay the price of living.”

* * * * *

So I have written—for long months I have written. For the most part I have been, happily, the sport of an illusion. I have forgotten myself while writing of myself. I have seemed to write of myself as of another self. I no longer feel for

myself, I no longer suffer for myself. I am dead. All that I have suffered has been for the other Ellinore, of whom I wrote. Nothing else but this illusion could have given me strength to write thus clearly and correctly all that I have written.

I had once, however, a horrible, experience; as if my body, tortured, mangled, and left for dead, had come back to life to rehearse, for one brief moment, all that it had suffered and endured. It was once—soon after they had buried me here—when I heard footsteps overhead. Not the stealthy, cat-like walk of those who prowled about me in the day, and in the darkness of the night; but a firm and manly tread of one whose deeds are honest. Climbing up the ladder I thought I heard a voice, and yet another—of the woman and the man I loved: but even as I heard and called aloud, the footsteps and the voices died away. It may have been a fancy, only—yet, why not the truth? I knew that some time, if not then, that in their searching they would seek me where I had been—and, alas, go away, as they had gone, without me. And all that day, and night, I lay upon my face so hurt, so hurt,—that all the pain I had yet known, seemed to this pain, joy. But that too passed, and I became again my lifeless self.

What if I should cease to write, and only think,

and think, until my poor, poor head would lose itself in the mad fancies of a mad hour? I have seen poor delirious creatures live in fancy, and gayly live, in other places than they were. Alas! I may be nearer madness than I know, that I have come to wonder if it were not better to be gayly mad, than take the chance of suffering more. No! let me still write on; to my despair is added curiosity, a ghastly curiosity, to know, and sanely know, the dire experiences that may yet be mine before the end shall come.

CHAPTER V.

APRIL 1ST. My manuscript has disappeared. I had kept it in my bed, beneath my pillow. But yesterday, not knowing what to write, and thinking I should have nothing more to write, I laid it in a drawer of my dressing-bureau. The mysterious woman has taken it, I am sure—as sure as I can be without knowing. Well, what matters it? It—that which I have written—has served its purpose; and the dire thing it saved me from, I need no longer fear—for I am too despairing, too lifeless to go mad.

APRIL 4TH. I only know by my calendar, that Spring has come. What have I now to write about? My days and nights are all alike—all night, a long night of weariness and solitude. Now that I have told my story, the illusion—that I am another than myself—has vanished, and I am I—the despairing, the dead.

APRIL 7TH. A strange desire has come over me! a desire to see, not Courtney, not Mrs. Edmonds; for it is that desire long ago believed unattainable, that makes now my deadness and my despair—but

a desire to see once more the white haired man; him who looked half like a captive, uncrowned king, and half a suffering and a pitying saint—the white haired man who stood behind the grating of his prison window, watching me as I, from my window, watched him. For his own sake, more than for my own, I wish that I could see him. He seemed so happy when I stood before him and so mournful when I turned away; and something tells me he is always mournful now, since he has no more a sight of me. Perhaps he saw a likeness in my face to some one he has loved and lost; I know that could I think, my memory would, from somewhere in the past, call up the semblance of a face that I had seen like his.

APRIL 11TH. I have been reading in my Bible. It is strange that they took it with the “little things” they brought with me! It proves that even devils believe there is a comfort that can come alone from God. I am an old fashioned Christian. That is, I believe in Bible reading and in prayer. And yet, through all these months of tomb-like living, I have not, until lately, opened once my Bible. “O God—my Father! Go with me where I am going!” So, in coming to this dark and lonely prison, I had prayed; and since then I have prayed only from

habit, and not with fervor, not with faith. Who can tell why—unless, that once here, I learned to think myself beyond the reach of God? But that can not be. He who is present everywhere, must be here too. Tortured Christians dying, yet rejoiced; martyrs in crucial torment, looked in ecstasy toward Heaven. These had nothing from this world but pain. Whence then came their joy, but from Heaven? There lacks yet something in my believing. I long too much for the Earth, and not enough for Heaven. Let me then read and pray with a new fervor, that I may find the joy those Christian martyrs found—the peace that is alone the gift of Heaven.

APRIL 25TH. All this week, in my fancy, I have seen perpetually before my eyes the long grass and the flowers of Springtime. I keep wondering where they will bury me when I am gone. Whether it will be in some quiet spot, where the sunshine and the bright shadows may touch lingeringly my grave; or whether it will be in the darkness of an unknown tomb—like this. But what will it matter? I have found the peace that helps me to live as though I were already in another life. I think no longer of the past; and when I think of Courtney, it is with the thought that I shall see him next beyond

the shadows and the suffering of this life. For I have prayed to die. It is no sin to ask the God who gave us life, to take it to Himself again. And so I wait; for in the presence of the peace that helps me to forget this life, I read the answer to my prayer; and one day—I think it will be soon—I shall lay me down to sleep for the last time in the darkness of this night, and waken else where to glad day.

MAY 6TH. Something has happened. I heard this morning the singing of a bird. No human tongue could tell the gladness and the good that singing brought to me! No one could feel this gladness and this good, but one imprisoned like me. The bird was perched upon the grated opening far above me. It sang; I listened in mute ecstasy. Then it flew away; and flying back, came through the grating of my prison. Poor little frightened thing! It feared to stay; and wildly beat about the grating till at last it struck the small opening, and flew out. But something fluttering, fluttered down, and dropped upon my folded hands. It was a blade of grass—a green and dewy offering from the glad world without! I looked upon it, breathed its scented freshness, kissed its tender green, and through tears blessed the giver and the gift.

All day I have thought of nothing else, but of this bird—of its coming to me, its singing to me, its bringing to me the blade of grass. Here, in this buried prison, this is a strange thing to happen; and if others, who may read of it, may see in it no meaning—and it may have no meaning for me—I see in it a promise, as of old good Noah saw, that I shall look again upon the green and living earth.

And what if it be no fancy, this I feel, but indeed a promise? What if this strange peace, that lately has been mine, and that I have thought an answer to my prayer to save me from this dreadful dying, by death, is still an answer to my prayer to save me—but by another way than death? O God of Heaven! What if Thou, who canst do all things, hast made a way through which I may walk out from this buried darkness, to live yet in the light and life this side of Heaven! This is too much joy to fancy with these four dark walls about me! And yet, I can not keep back—with other and sad fancies of sad facts—the feeble springing up of hope from the dust of my despair.

How strange it is that I can hope! I, that a little while ago seemed dead to all earthly hope! So little do we know to-day what we may want to-morrow! But yesterday it seemed so sweet to think that ere the morning I might die; and now—I almost hope to live.

MAY 12TH. Something else has happened—something wondrous, wondrous strange! I am no longer dead, no longer despairing, no longer unhappy! This prison is no longer a tomb—it is a Bethel! I no longer pray to die—I thank God that He has heard my prayer in His own way, and let me live! All through the months of faithless praying and mute despair, the Helper had not left me; it was only that I would not feel He must be near. So this, that I have written, may help some suffering and despairing one to pray—to pray, and, trusting, wait. For my suffering, for which I saw no reason and no justice, was the way, God's way, to bring me to a happiness and good I could have found no other way.

This is what happened. Last evening, after my supper had been brought, and my mute attendant had left me for the night, I heard some one descend the ladder. Since the disappearance of the manuscript, I have thought the mysterious woman might come at any time; so that it was she whom I expected to see. Down the footsteps came, and nearer; then, it was not the silent, black-gowned woman that stood before me. It was a man; the white haired stranger—him who looked half like a captive, uncrowned king, and half like a pitying saint. I had no thought of fear, no thought that

he was not as sane as I. I had so longed to look upon his face; so he had longed, I knew, to look on mine. It seemed quite natural we should seek each other, quite natural that he was there. But how had he known where to find me, and knowing, how had he come? This I asked him as he stood before me, as I had always seen him stand—his small white hands meekly crossed before him.

But there was no answer; he only looked at me, tenderly, wistfully, while from his eyes, that I had only known as mournful, shone a strange and joyous light; and now that I saw him close, the likeness to some other one whom I had known, or seen, grew stronger and more puzzling.

“Who are you? Where have I seen you—or another like you?” I asked, not waiting for an answer to the question I had first asked.

“Ellinore!” he said in a sweet and trembling voice, laying his hands on mine; while I, all trembling at his touch, waited, breathlessly, the strange something I knew he had to say. “Ellinore,” I know your history; and, without your knowing that you know it, you know mine. I did not need to read what you have written, to know the truth. I saw it, felt it, each day that you stood behind the grating of your window, as I looked at you. Can you not guess my meaning now?”

“No !” I said, and wondering, waiting, gazed at him.

“Ellinore, the story—as you have written it—says that your father died in a madhouse. Poor man ! he was shut up ; but, child, he was not mad—*he is not dead !*”

“What are you saying ? What is your meaning ?” I cried, and fell upon my knees before him. “Oh, have pity ! and do not kindle in my sad heart a hope that he, my father, is not dead—if he be dead ! You ! you must know something of my father—to speak like this ! You—oh Heaven ! why are you so strangely near and dear to me ? Ah— ! who are you—who ?”

“Give me your mother’s locket, Ellinore !”

And straightway I took it from my neck. And long he gazed, and tenderly, upon the picture of my mother ; then, through tears, he looked at me, and murmured low,—

“Oh child, how much, how very much, you look like her—your mother !”

And then, while I mute with wonder still trembling knelt before him, he touched a hidden spring that opened—that which I had not known till then could open—the locket on the other side ; and with a pin he raised the frail glass from its covering, and took from its hiding—where it had lain so long

unlooked upon—a tress of hair; and as from his lifted hand it fell, a floating curl of silken softness, he placed its blackness against the blackness of my hair, and murmured yet again,—

“It is the same! I knew it at the first sight of you behind your prison window. It is the same hair as hers—your mother’s.”

Within the locket where the hair had rested, I read the words—“From Ellinore to Reginald:” then followed the month and date of the year. Quick as I read, he took from his own neck a locket, precisely like the locket that I wore; and opening it, he took from it a little curl of glossy blackness, and placing it upon the snowy whiteness of his own, he said,—

“My hair was once like this—this little curl I gave your mother.” And following still his eyes that looked within the locket, I read—“From Reginald to Ellinore,” and the same date of month and of year that I had read in mine—my mother’s locket.

“And you—and you—!” I gasped, dizzy and faint with the bliss of a hope that waited only for one word to know its truth.

“*I am Reginald Trevalyn!* I AM YOUR FATHER, Ellinore! As sure as we both look upon the pictured face of her who was your mother, of her who was my wife—I am your father!”

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From a long embrace close to his heart, my father gently raised me; and making bare his bosom, he showed me the little, blood-red cross—his birth-mark, born with him—and below the cross, the anchor made by his mother. Then we both were silent. The time was too sweetly solemn, yet, for words—save that from time to time my heart, to try the newness of its joy, breathed from my lips the one word,—“Father!” while from his came softly back,—“my child!”

“Father,” I said, at last, “the locket that you have, you had given to my mother; the one I wear, is yours: why have I not the other, and you this?”

“Dear, when your mother died, I placed the locket that I wore, about your neck, that I might see her face with yours, always before me; and the creature who stole you, stole, too, the locket. She might have taken the other—the locket that I gave to your mother—for it was there, upon my dressing-bureau; but that she hated me too much to look upon my face, and, fearing, would never let you look.”

“Your likeness father—in the locket that you wear, in the locket that I saw? Oh, let me see you as you were—young and joyous, like my mother!”

“No, my child, not now; but surely at some other time. Be patient, dear, and wait.”

"Alas!" I thought, "his face that is so noble and so sweet to me, must have sadly changed through all the years of pain and solitude; so much changed, he cannot bear to look with me upon himself as he was in that happy time."

"Father, I would not have you other than you are. I love you like this," I said,—and kissed his snow white hair. And smiling, he made no answer.

"Father," again I questioned, "does Marcus Pancho know that you are here, and that you are my father?"

"No, child, he does not know me even as I am known here, nor as your father. He believes me dead, as you believed me. It was the wisdom only of an ever loving God, that led the mind of him who means your ruin, to bring you here to this Asylum, instead of to another; it was the gracious will of Heaven, that made the evil of your enemy to be your good."

"Then it was you, my father, and not the unknown woman, that took the manuscript? But how did you know that I was here? How could you come to me? Why are you no longer shut up as—" I paused, then added—"as I am?"

"Poor child! You were about to say—'as all are shut up in this mad-house—all whom they believe mad! But let me answer, without your asking, all the questions that you might ask. And first: it was

she whom you call the 'unknown woman,' and not I, who took your manuscript. She came to this Asylum about the time, I think, that you were brought here ; for I saw her first within your room, one morning as she took the grating from your window. It was later, that same morning, that I saw you ; and, Ellinore, at that first sight of you, who are the living image of your mother, I felt the truth—that you were mine, my daughter. The creature who had stolen you, and put me here, had told me you were living—living to know her as your mother, and to believe your father dead ; and that one day you should be here too, in this dreadful place, imprisoned, as I was, for life. And when I saw you before your window—a vision, I first thought, of my dead Ellinore—so near, and yet so helplessly apart from me ; so near me—your father, Ellinore, your father, who could not speak to you, who could not make a sign, lest he should frighten you, or lest some watching keeper should take from him the joy of seeing you—I then divined the truth : that the cruel fiend had kept her word, and that her vengeance was complete.

You must have felt—for you have written it down—the mournful pleasure that I found in watching you. When your face showed signs of suffering, you must have seen, in mine, that I too suffered, for

your sake. The first days that I missed you from your window, were hours for me of sickening terror ; lest you—too innocent to know the cunning of the way to make your keepers think you harmless—were tortured, or ill, or despairing, or had died. And when the days of a whole week passed without one sight of you, I grew ill—so ill, they must have thought it wise to send your ‘unknown woman’ to me. It was then that she saw the locket ; and it was then that she plied me with strange questions. And so I came to tell her who I was, and—when I found she did not believe me crazy—the story of my life, as you, Ellinore, have written it. I did not tell her, then, that you were my daughter, nor that my illness was for your sake. I was afraid—she seemed so cold, so hard—that the telling might do harm to you. I only said that I had seen you, pitied you, and missed you from your window—this, in the hope that she would tell me something of you. She only said that you were elsewhere in this Asylum,—that is for you and me a prison—and that you were comfortable, and that you were well. And then she left me ; and in all the weeks that followed, I saw her not, until about six weeks ago, when she came again, in strange excitement, to my room, and with feverish haste asked if I bore the marks of a cross and anchor upon my breast ; and when for my answer I had

shown them to her—that with her own eyes seeing she might believe—she asked me what had been the color of my hair, and how I had looked when I was young. And when, again for my answer, I told her to look upon the picture of myself within this locket—she had only seen the outside, in seeing it weeks before—she grew deadly pale, and with a smothered cry put the manuscript within my hands; the manuscript that told the story of your life—as you have written it—and of Marcus Pancho's, and of mine.

It is this mysterious woman, Ellinore, who, by the adroitness of her management, has found a way to bring me here. She has become, for some reason unknown to you and me, your friend and mine. She will lead us both from this living death, to the outer, living life.”

“Why,” I asked, in sudden fear, thinking how poor our chance of escape might be, if it must depend alone on her; “why has this woman come here—for if it be as you say, she was not here before I came? I know she helped to bring me here, and that she was not then my friend. Why is she now your friend, and mine? But even if her heart has grown pitying; even should she find a way to take us from this prison; who can save me—and you, once he knows you—from the deadly vengeance of Marcus Pancho?”

“Why she came, your ‘unknown woman,’ I do not know. I only suspect that she came, as sent by Marcus Pancho, to guard you from your keepers, to keep you suffering, and yet unharmed, for some new vengeance he thinks yet within his wicked soul to wreak upon you. It may be, Ellinore, that this woman,—who I suspect is one that you know, one whom, from your manuscript, I might name—has blindly served the will of Marcus; and that only through what you have written, she has learned at last to know him as he is, and that she has herself a wrong from him to avenge. However this may be, my daughter, I feel that we may surely count upon her; and that for some secret reason, and more for her own sake than for yours or mine, she will not fail to help us from this—our prison. And when he comes, this Marcus Pancho, she has promised to bring him face to face with me; and for the rest—wait Ellinore; we have our secret,—this ‘unknown woman’ and I. You can do nothing yet to help us, but, trusting, to wait.”

“Father, what does she look like, this woman—whom, seeing always in disguise, I have not yet seen?”

“My father’s latest words about the mysterious woman, had put a strange fancy in my head; a fancy that I saw my father shared; for, to my sudden

question, his answer came with a smile that had a meaning,—

“The woman is still young, and wears the manners of a lady—but she is not handsome. She looks a disappointed, desperate woman. An unnatural redness burns upon her cheek, and a fierce light flashes from her eyes—as though she nursed within her mind some purpose of revenge.”

Here we heard the muffled tinkling of a bell, that came from the vaulted darkness overhead. And at the sound my father kissed me, hastily arose, and whispering that to-morrow he would come again, rapidly ascended the ladder, and disappeared.

I knew, without his saying it, that it was the unknown woman that had given the signal, and that she had waited for him in my room above. “A disappointed, desperate woman,” my father had said; “who perhaps has blindly served the will of Marcus Pancho; and who, in reading what you have written, has learned at last to know him as he is, and that she has herself a wrong from him to avenge.” Who else could she be, but—no, I will not say her name,—not yet. Why have I not from the first—why have I not always thought of her?

“Once, I heard her voice; ‘Ellinore’ she called me, and it was the voice—that I felt then, that I know now, I had heard somewhere, at some

other time—that made me turn, and turning, they had seized me, and had brought me herē. I know now why I have never seen her face, and why, save that one time, I have heard only in whispers her voice. Poor soul! What could she do—she of whom I think—allied to Marcus Pancho, but “blindly serve his will,” while, to serve his own purpose, he seemed yet to love her, yet to be kind to her? What could she become, but a “disappointed, desperate woman,” once she had learned to know him as he is? The longer I think upon this—that I have named a “strange fancy—” the more I feel that it is not a fancy, but the truth.

MAY 20TH. Every day, at the same hour, my father has been with me. We have so much to say, that we never cease talking. He likes best to talk of my mother; I too like it best. And I keep thinking, that if we could see as angels see, we should see her too, my mother, here with us: this thought, with my father’s tenderness in every glance, in every word, makes me forget that all my life I was an orphan.

It is so strange and sweet to have a father, and to know I had a good and loving mother! It is such happiness to have a name, to have the right to be called Ellinore Trevalyn—and not the “miser’s daughter!”

Each time I look upon my father, each time I hear him speak, I know yet better why my mother loved him so—and why the other woman hated; it is so much to have his love—he gives in loving so much good; and not to have it, is so much to lose.

MAY 21ST. I am almost sure that I have solved the mystery of the black-gowned woman; and that she is—and yet, I will not name her. She was here last night. The lamp was burning low; but I could see that she still wore the curious gown with its hood drawn over her face. Now that I suspect who she is, her walk, her every movement seems familiar. Once I had a mind to speak, to call her by the name I think is hers; but with that mind I had another—yet to wait; to know first, in some other way, something more of her. And while she stood still a moment, listening, I made no movement; but with soft and long drawn breathing feigned to be asleep, and from the half darkness where I lay, I watched her. She placed something upon my bureau; then stood silent and motionless—a *silhouette* against the shaded radiance of the lamp. What were her thoughts, as she waited there in the silence of my prison? They were not happy ones, I know; for a deep sigh, most like a sob, came to my ear; and then she glided like a sombre spectre through my room, and out of sight.

When she had gone, I opened the parcel, and found the manuscript and a letter from my father. He will not be here to-day—so the letter says. “Not till the ‘unknown woman,’ who goes away to-morrow—for your sake, my daughter, and for mine—shall return.” This dear, first letter from my father, I have placed beside the first—that was my last—letter from Courtney; both letters nearest—as they who wrote them are themselves the dearest—to my heart.

Since the first day that I found my father, in obedience to his wish, I have asked no questions about our near future; and I know nothing of the plans for our escape. But he, my father, says—and I know he would not say it if it were not true—that we shall soon be free; and it is impossible, now, to think of anything else but of a future of love and happiness with my father, and Courtney, and Mrs. Edmonds.

CHAPTER VI.

MAY 29TH. IT is she! I have seen her, I have talked with her! She has just gone away, and I am not sure that I am able to quiet my mind or my body, sufficiently to write intelligibly all that has happened, and all that has been told to me!

I have not written in my journal since the day I received my father's letter. I have been too anxious, too unhappy, until now, to write. How thankful I am to be again glad! This last week of new loneliness and of new pain, has assured me that one is not always dead to suffering when one believe one's self to be; but that one has only to be again glad, to feel again much suffering.

When the first days had passed without seeing my father, I became alarmed, and unhappy; and each added day that marked his absence, added yet another fear, another pain, until this morning—when my alarm was terror, my pain torture. The continued absence of my father assured me that the woman, who was our friend, had not yet returned—for it was through her help alone that my father could come to me. “What if something has hap-

pened to her to prevent her return? What if she should die—has died? What if we should be found out before our safety can be assured? What if I should never again see this woman, never again see my father? What, oh what, if I am yet to live within this darkness—yet to die within this prison?” These, and a host of other terrifying thoughts—once they began to come—came hurrying one upon another, until my poor heart was tortured with a dread, that in all its suffering days had not been more unbearable. And then she came—the black-gowned woman—and like a straying and bewildered child, who sees at last a loving mother who has come to seek; so I, too glad for words, fell down sobbing at her feet.

“Rise, Ellinore! It is not well that you should kneel to such as I! But that I, low kneeling at your feet, should here confess the wrong that I have done, and beg forgiveness—if a human heart can pardon such as I. Your pity, although I need pity more than you, I can not ask it—I, who withheld all mine from you.”

And with these words, she—who was no longer unknown to me—with her own strength raised me up; and falling down before me with bowed head, she threw the hood back from her face, took from her head its false grey covering, and from her eyes

the colored glasses; and still kneeling, with clasped hands, and eyes down-looking, waited.

“Mabel! Mabel Livingston! It is then you—indeed you! You who have wronged, so much, the friend who best loved you!”

Even while she knelt before me; even while I guessed the wretched blindness that had made her what she was; even with tears in my eyes, and with pity in my soul—I could not keep from these, my first words to her, the sting of a reproach. But following this, without waiting for her answer, I laid my hands upon her still bowed head, and said, in a voice she could not take for other than of pity,—

“But, Mabel, I forgive you! In pity for the much you must have suffered ere you went so far astray; in pity now, still more, that you see with unblinded eyes the hideous thing you bought with a woman’s richest price—your virtue and your affection—Mabel, I forgive you!”

At last the bowed head raised; at last the eyes, long hidden, looked at me; at last I saw her as she was—Mabel, yet not Mabel! The change was frightful. The face was most like marble, so cold it seemed to look upon, and colorless—save for a fevered spot that burned on either cheek. The lines about the mouth traced the grown hardness of the wronged and embittered soul within; and

from her eyes flashed the light of a fixed purpose—a wild, fierce light, such as I should expect to see look from the strange vision of poor delirious souls that are enchained about me, somewhere in this prison.

“Poor soul!” I said, “I know your mournful story, with its cruel torment, before you tell it; and no harsher words than I have spoken, shall I yet speak! You have my pity, Mabel, I repeat; you have my pity for the pain you must have suffered, ere your heart grew hard enough to help to bring me so much pain.”

“Ellinore,” she answered, with out a tremor in her voice, without a dimming of the eyes, to tell me that from her poor seared heart I had drained one drop of the old time feeling; “Ellinore, if my eyes had not outwept their power to weep; now, seeing your saint-like pity, I should weep with you; if I yet could feel, I should now feel the deepest gratitude a soul can feel, for this, your much forgiveness. But, I can not weep; I have no feeling—save a deep, a perpetual longing for revenge.”

And with these words the strange light in her eyes glowed yet more fiercely, and for a moment she forgot, in the dark-broodings of her one desire, my presence; and then again remembering, she con-tinued,—

“Ellinore, as I live, I tell you true: I can no longer feel, save in the memory of pain that I have felt. I have no pity in my heart, save a strange pity for myself. What I have lately done for you, what I shall yet do, is from duty—for your sake; and for my own sake—revenge. But we have no time for sentiment. Let me tell the story—that I must tell, and that you must hear—as briefly as I can.

Ellinore, from the first hour that I saw Marcus Pancho, when he came so suddenly before us in the Art-gallery, I loved him with a mad idolatry. I had always, in my heart, an intense desire to be loved; and believing myself unlovable, and that your regard for me—like that of my parents—had more of pity than of love, I was a fit subject for the wicked cunning of the fiend—that I then believed was more of angel than of man—who chose me for his victim. You must know how easy it was, for such as he, to make my will no longer mine, but his. I saw only as he declared he saw; I believed only as he assured me he believed; and the first moment we were left alone, he told me that he loved me, even as I loved him. And at that moment he also assured me that I must keep our love a secret from you, and from every one; that once it was known, he should be forced to leave me, forced to deny

our love. That was enough ; no torture could have made me show a sign of my own loving, or of his love.

His own management, and the confidence of my parents in him, furnished us a thousand ways, when you were not with us, to be left alone together, and to enjoy, as we might wish, our loving. When my parents went away—for the first time without me—trusting me wholly to your care, we met every day, Marcus and I, during the two hours you were not with me. It was then that he told me that he was bound by a solemn oath—an oath that to break would bring him ruin and dishonor—to marry another, or not to marry at all ; and that if he married me, it must be secretly, and when we were both far away from the presence and the knowledge of all who had ever known us. After that it was easy to persuade me to go with him, to leave my home and all whom I had known, for his sake—for love of him. And we had appointed a day of the following week for our flight, when the arrival of a telegram, that fatal afternoon, announced the unexpected return of my parents that evening. I had just left you, and going up the steps to my father's house, it was I who took the telegram—which I destroyed—from the boy. As soon as I had made known to Marcus—whom

a few minutes later I met, as usual, for our secret rendezvous—the contents of the telegram, he decided that we must go that afternoon: and that I should go at once to your room, and still guarding carefully our secret from you, should wait there for him; and that when he would come, I should learn something that would surprise me.

You remember when I came to your room that afternoon, and of my manner towards you? I had always been cautious when with you, but then, I felt sad at the thought that I should pain you in leaving you without a word of explanation, and at the thought that I might never again see you; and I betrayed this sadness by my unusual warmth of manner towards you, and in my words to you; and I do not know what would have been the result of your questioning, had not Marcus come at that moment. It was then that your manner surprised me. For how could I have known—who had never known of your malady—that the sudden striking of the gong—that he said he had brought as a gift to you—had put you to sleep? And imagine my astonishment, Ellinore, to find that after your first apparent displeasure at his coming, unannounced, to learn a moment later, from your own lips, that it was you that had brought about my first meeting with Marcus in the Art-gallery; and that you

knew of our secret meeting each day—all this you made known to me then, in response to questions that Marcus asked you. My astonishment still continued, when—after Marcus had explained his plan for our flight, and asked you to help us—you did quietly, without any apparent emotion either of regret or of surprise all that he directed you to do. I had no time to question you, as I desired to do; Marcus would not permit me to do so. He said we had no time to lose, and that every moment lost to us would be a help to my parents in their search for us.

You know the rest: except, you do not know that when we left your room—you and I, and Marcus—the last time, we had only gone a short distance from the house when Marcus stopped the carriage, saying that it might be more prudent for me to go alone to the place designated by him, and that he should return with you to your room, and leaving you there—so as to prevent suspicion—he would rejoin me an hour later. It must have been then, Ellinore, while you were alone with Marcus, that you wrote the fatal letter—unconsciously, and at his dictation—that he afterwards gave to me, and which was the cause of all your suffering—so far as I am responsible for it—and, who knows, perhaps of mine. That same night, in stooping down,

adroitly stooping, the letter dropped—as he meant for it to do—from his pocket. I saw the address—the seal was yet unbroken—and that it was your writing. Reaching down, I picked it up; not thinking that I might not open and read, with him, a letter written by you. The slight embarrassment, the hesitation—all that he knew so well to feign, to keep the letter from me—surprised me; and, you know the rest: because he *seemed* to make a secret of the letter, I *would* see it. And here it is, Ellinore, that letter. No, let me read it to you; you, in your indignation, will be too long in reading it!

‘DEAR MARCUS:—You will read this—for you have promised not to read it until you are far from me—when it will be too late to save her, whom you love, from ruin. Too late; for once she has been, of her own will, your *mistress*, she will not leave you when she knows she can not be—as she must hope to be—your wife.

I too love you, even as you love Mabel. Once you loved me, and then—you hated. You refused to take me with you, even as you now take Mabel; and this is my revenge for your little love of me; this—that I know you cannot make the woman you love, your wife; that you will not, for your own safety, do it. Tell her this—her whom you love—with

your arms about her, and with a loving kiss to make each word less cruel. Tell her, too—that which you yourself have not suspected—that my seeming to be good to her, with you, was only for a purpose; that only for ambition's sake, I, knowing all about your loving, seemed to her not to know; and that ambition, only, has given me courage to let her go with you, even as your mistress—for to gain, as I hope to do in losing her, I must lose you. She will understand, then, my silence and my reserve at the last hours of your going—when, against my will, you told her I knew all. You had promised not to tell; not till you had read this letter, that I told you I should, at the last moment of your going, give you; this letter, which, if you keep your word, you will only read when you are far away with Mabel.'

Ellinore, for a little while I think that I was mad. 'Marcus Pancho!' I cried, in a voice that sounded strange and awful to me, 'Have you and this Ellinore both deceived me—both plotted for my ruin? Is this the woman to whom you are bound by an oath to marry—or not at all to marry? What is the secret of her strange power over you? What is the meaning of her dreadful letter? What will she gain in losing me, that gives her courage to lose you?

'Sweet Mabel!' he answered, in a voice so mourn-

ful and so sweet, it made me shiver in the pain of wishing I might never want to hear it more. 'Sweet Mabel! that woman holds the proofs of my disgrace, and of my mother's. My mother was a dishonored woman; dishonored first, when she was a young and virtuous woman, by him who afterwards, happily wed, was Ellinore's father. While she, my ruined mother, doomed to a life of sin, brought me forth, a child—not of him who had first with vows of love betrayed her; but of—alas! my mother herself knew not of whom—a nameless, unknown father. I was given when a infant to a wealthy lady; and in the town where she came with me, the people believed I was, by right of birth, this woman's child. To the same town had come, unknown, my wretched, real mother; who, by some strange fate—the parents having died—had gotten possession of Ellinore, the child of him who had first betrayed her, and whom she had hated. The little world about us believed her my own mother's child—the child of the woman no one knows as my mother. And Ellinore does not know the truth. She knows not that to hate alone she is indebted for her wretched mother; nor why that mother hates her, nor why I hate. As we grew older, Ellinore—notwithstanding the difference in our position, and her knowledge of my dislike of her—conceived a

passionate liking for me. But I, who knew the truth—that but for her father, who had taught my mother first to sin, that mother might have been a loved and honored woman, and I the child of a known father—I, still hated.

It was at this time that she got possession of the proofs of my illegitimate birth, and of the fact that the woman who hates her is not her mother. And in my terror lest she would do, as she declared she would, make public my mother's disgrace—that mother whom in secret I loved—as well as my own disgrace; and in my dread too of poverty—for the woman who had been known as my mother had died without a will; and as her son I of course claimed the first right of inheritance; but which, if the truth were known, I could no longer claim—in my terror at the prospect of all this, and at the demand of Ellinore, who never forgave my want of love for her, I bought her silence by a solemn oath—as I would never consent to marry her—never to marry another.

But, Mabel, I was not knowing more than you, that Ellinore was deceiving us. I thought she had changed in the years since I had known her, and that in her pity for me—knowing my love for you—she was sincere in the aid she was all the time, unknown to you, giving us; and, as she says—and

simply because she asked it—I promised not to tell you, until later, of this aid. But, at the last moment—when we had decided upon that afternoon for our flight—fearing some deception on her part, I told you, in her presence, the truth; so that she, in helping us in the preparations for our flight, might be in our power, should she subsequently betray us. You noticed her silence and her reserve during these preparations; and it was when I went back with her to her room, leaving you in the carriage, that she gave me the letter that you have just read, and which I promised not to read until we were far away. You know that the letter was unopened when it dropped from my pocket; and although my experience in the past prevented me from having entire confidence in her protestations of good feeling toward me, yet, I assure you, I am as much astonished as you are, at the thoroughly malicious and revengeful spirit of the letter. But I am thankful we have read it: For, Mabel, I understand now her apparent goodness to you and to me. It was, as she says—wholly for the sake of ambition. She meant, in getting rid of you without compromising herself, to possess, to a still greater degree than she already possesses, the esteem and affection of your parents; to make herself necessary to them: to win completely from them the favor that you have never

received, and which, disgraced and dishonored—as you will henceforth be designated by them—you can never hope to receive; in short, she expects to be received, in your stead, by your father and mother, as their daughter, and consequently to enjoy all the advantages that the home and the affection of your parents can bestow.”

‘She shall not! She shall not!’ I cried in a frenzied way. ‘I will go to my father and mother—you will go with me to them! I will confess my error and beg their forgiveness—you will confess yours, and beg too, to be forgiven! You will marry me with their consent—for they love you! Then let this wicked Ellinore tell the truth—we can tell it too! The shame of your birth is not your fault. We can go away, as we were going to do, where no one will know us! What if you shall be poor? My father will give me enough for us both! Come, let us go! What if we shall be disgraced—what if we should be banished? Ellinore will be disgraced and banished too! What if we must suffer? Ellinore shall suffer too!’

‘Mabel, my love, you must not go!’ And kneeling down he clasped his arms about me. ‘You must not leave me! I cannot give you up! And it would come to this—that I should be forced to leave you. It would come to this, too—as it is now—that you

would leave all to follow me, to be with me—my love, my life. For I could not, for my mother's sake, more than for my own, bear the disgrace of my birth, once it is known; and should we return to do as you, not knowing what you say, now wish to do, Ellinore would make it known. I should not then be able to take care of you should you wish to go with me. I should be penniless; and I know not how to work. You are wrong, my Mabel, all wrong, in thinking that your parents would pity us. They would never permit me to marry you, once knowing my disgrace. And you, Mabel, they might forgive you, but they would never forget. They are too proud. You know how small has been their love for you, and smaller yet their pride in you; and that your presence would always speak to them of your dishonor. For, dear, although you are not yet my wife, you have been a wife to me. You know this, and they will know it too. No! my Mabel, there is a better way. We will go away together—as we have planned to do—to some land where we may live unnoticed and unknown; and, who knows, but that time, or death, may rid me of my enemy, and that then you will not only be my love, but you will be my wife? The revenge you covet—and that I covet too, with you—we will have another way. Ellinore,—who hopes to gain, by your misfortune, a reward rich

enough to compensate her for the pain of knowing that I love you,—shall be unmasked before your parents, whom she expects so largely to deceive, and will be despised by them; she shall go from their hearts and home—in which she hoped to reign—banished by them, and in disgrace. Come, Mabel, my love! I will dictate, and you will write the letter that will make, believe me, your revenge complete.’

For a little while I stood, not yet persuaded to his way. I yet believed in God, in Heaven—and the Angel strove with me. I knew, even in my mad thinking, that it would be better to turn back; to seek my home, and pardon from my parents; and in good deeds, in penitential tears, in a henceforth virtuous life, atone for what I had done, and secure a peace of conscience I could only in that way secure. But Marcus still knelt before me; and to his pleading, seeing I waited, added yet his tears. Tears, Ellinore, in the eyes of him whose heart is adamant! Again he touched upon, until it bled, the sorest wound I carried,—the sense within my heart that felt the small affection of my parents for me. He pictured my life henceforth with them, still less loved than I had been, and condemned and pitied by every one; all this, and more, that I should suffer without the solace of his presence or his love.

So I listened to his tender pleading, so I yielded to his soft caressing; and from that hour all good died in my heart, and evil only staid with me. Again I read your letter—the letter that made a fiend of me—and many times again, until from each word that burned its dreadful meaning into my anguished mind, flamed up a fierce desire to be a curse, so long as you and I should live, upon your pathway.

And then Marcus dictated, and I wrote, the letter that so much surprised you. Marcus had kept watch of your movements, and he managed to send the letter while you were in the presence of my father, knowing that in his indignation he would give you the letter to read. We knew all that happened in regard to you. And I had still greater confidence in the judgment of Marcus, when—after he had assured me that you would invent some clever story to excuse your apparent knowledge and approval of our flight—I found that he had judged you correctly. But I was not prepared for the extraordinary explanation you gave of your conduct; and I was still more embittered towards you for what, I then believed, was an other revelation of your malicious cunning and wickedness.

Ellinore, see what your unfortunate malady has done for me! For had it not been yours, this mal-

ady, or had you told me that it was yours—who knows, but that Marcus would have been found some other way, without me, without my ruin and suffering, to work his wicked will with you?

In time,—after you had gone—we went away; but not as Marcus had promised—to some ‘far off land, where we might live unnoticed and unknown;’ but from place to place, and never far from you. When Marcus thus staid, although I knew it was for vengeance, I doubted. In losing faith in you, Ellinore, I lost faith in all humanity. And although then, when I was wholly dependent upon the love of Marcus, I loved him more than ever, I had no longer a full faith in him. I was not happy after our flight—not even in the first days of our loving. He had deceived me once, in regard to you, and he had not kept his promise to go away with me; and I was always afraid of being again deceived, and of making unhappy discoveries. This fear made me suspicious, and often fault-finding. It is thus that our wrong doing makes us afflict, with the wrong, ourselves.

And Marcus could not always, even in those first months, present the false appearance with which he had first won me; and at times he was irritable, at others cold, sometimes cruel. But if he left me, from time to time, he always came back; and each

return was followed by an increase of loving, and a manner more caressing. And it was these times of his loving, that held me always his still obedient, his still adoring slave. I know now, in recalling them—with the help of what you have written—that these best moments preceded, every time, some use he had to make of me. For that is what I was for him—even as you have said I must be, to be his,—a tool with which to torture you; a tool that he might use when so it pleased him, or abuse.

We, or rather Marcus, kept watch of you. I learned of you only through him; and now I know that only sometimes it was the truth he told me, and oftener not; and that he colored all he said and did, with the deceit best suited to insure my blindness and the revenge he wished to bring about. But we were one in our hate of you, and in our desire to take all happiness from you. You loved Georgine Ellerton; not falsely—as I believed you had loved me—but with the unselfishness of a sincere and deep affection. I helped Marcus in the dreadful scheme that took your friend from you, and left you daft for thirteen months; for I believed you daft—I knew nothing yet of your strange malady.

During those thirteen months, Marcus—known then as Oscar Lyndhurst—was not, as Mrs. Edmonds

believed, far away from you; but near you—first in the West, then in the East, and then abroad. Wherever they went with you, Marcus followed; sometimes alone, sometimes with me. He, as Oscar Lyndhurst, received all of Mrs. Edmonds' letters—to which he made no answer—direct from the lawyer through which she sent them; who, paid by Marcus, deceived her too. When Marcus received the letter from Courtney Ellerton, he saw fit to answer with his presence; coming in haste 'from Algiers,' so he said; but he had not, for months, left London.

You were right, Ellinore, in your conclusion—that Marcus came to help to bring you back to conscious life, that he might bring you to a greater pain. During the months that followed your awakening, Marcus was more loving than ever to me, and more thoughtful in his care of me. He hinted of a time when I should be his wife; when he should be free to marry me; of a time when you would be powerless to keep us apart; and better yet—that while we should be happy, you would be very unhappy; and that you could never be the wife of Courtney Ellerton. And listening, once more I trusted, once more I was happy. Happy in the thought that I should be a wife—the wife of *him* I loved, of Marcus; while you—who I believed still loved Marcus—you whom I hated, would be unwed-

ded and unhappy, and without the power to harm us whom you hated.

And then Marcus told me of his long ago conceived intention—which had grown into a plan—to shut you up for life in an insane asylum. It was a difficult thing, without imperiling our safety, to do. It was especially difficult to get possession of you, as you had never been left alone. But you know by what fatality it was at last accomplished. Marcus, for his own safety, did not at first appear upon the scene. It was I, Ellinore, disguised as a Sister, and Doctor Simmonds—him whom you have named the ‘florid faced, the dead white handed man,’ and who is the physician in charge of this Asylum—who followed you, and without any of the trouble that was anticipated accomplished your abduction. You were taken at once to a house kept by a sister of Doctor Simmonds, where his patients are sometimes taken previous to their confinement in this Asylum. As you were driven away, (it is only through what you have written, that I know the truth, and what really occurred during your detention in that house,) Marcus appeared, and made known to me the plan, which, if successful, was to prevent suspicion from falling upon him, as your known enemy, and to insure the safety of us both.

The plan, as he persuaded me to believe it to be, was this: he, Marcus, would see you, and feigning repentance, and a great love for you, would confess that he, becoming desperate, had himself caused your abduction; and that it was only since he had tried to love another, and since he had learned that you were about to marry another, that he had learned to know his own heart, and how much, how madly he loved you; and that if you would go with him, of your own will, for very love of him, leaving a letter of frank explanation for Courtney and Mrs. Edmonds, he would gladly do, then, that same evening, what you had once entreated him to do—he would marry you.

As I have said, I had no thought that you loved Courtney Ellerton; but that you had consented to be his wife only from ambitious motives—as you had consented to my ruin; and I still believed, and Marcus helped me to believe, that you loved him—Marcus. But when he had made known to me the boldness of the plan, I was not so confident of its success as he was; for I could not know the fineness of that plan—not knowing yet of your malady. But he, knowing the dreadful help you, yourself, unconsciously would bring to bring your ruin, he planned too well for failure; and you, as you have divined, went sleep walking back to your room with

Marcus; where, at his dictation, you wrote a letter to Mrs. Edmonds and Courtney. Then, taking your trunk, with each thing of yours, as he directed, you went with him to the boat that was to convey you, during the night, to this Asylum.

Before the boat had left New York, I was already, with your luggage, on the way to precede your arrival, and to make ready here for you. And it was, again as you supposed, a woman's hands, my own, that arranged your room. But it was not my footsteps that you heard, thinking it was Mrs. Edmonds'; it was the step of Dr. Simmonds—the man who brought you here. For I—as soon as I had hung your gowns in the wardrobe, sorted your linen, and placed each thing where you saw it in your room—I went back again by railway, and reached New York before you had reached the Asylum. The letter which you found in your room, I had not seen; and it was only in reading your manuscript, that I knew its true contents, and that a copy of the one you had written Courtney—a copy you yourself had written—had been left for you.

On my return, Marcus informed me that he had drugged you in wine, that you had taken with him in your room, before leaving the hotel—when you gayly drank to the health of Courtney; and that

before you had reached the boat, you were unconscious ; and that he then left you in the care of Doctor Simmonds, who brought you here. Marcus took the steamer at an early hour for Europe ; while I at once secured a room in the hotel where you had been, on the same floor, and opposite to the rooms you had occupied with Mrs. Edmonds. Late in the afternoon of the same day, Mrs. Edmonds and Courtney returned. They entered the small parlor that was a part of your *suite* of rooms, and although the door was closed, I could hear almost every word and sound that was uttered ; and it must have been after the reading of your letter, that I heard a groan and an exclamation of anguish from Courtney, and an expression of amazement from Mrs. Edmonds, followed by an indignant protestation against her belief in your guilt.

‘I never will believe it, never ! Ellinore has been again the victim of some diabolical plot on the part of Marcus Pancho ! What a fatal mistake it was—our leaving her alone ! Courtney Ellerton, I have always believed you a brave man, a manly man ; and now, at the first signs of trouble, you look like this—half dead with hopelessness and terror ! Come, let us not lose a minute !’

There was no answer, save another moan ; but from the opening door came Mrs. Edmonds with a stern

countenance, and resolute, followed by Courtney, whose face was of a frightful pallor.

There was excitement everywhere. Every one was questioned. All the guests of the hotel crowded about, some from sympathy, others from curiosity. The servant, that had the care of your rooms, said she had seen you go out early in the day, and that when you returned, late in the afternoon, a very handsome man accompanied you—whose appearance she described.

‘Ah! that is he, that is Oscar Lyndhurst!’ cried Courtney, reeling as if he had been struck by a sudden blow; and the face of Mrs. Edmonds blanched to a sudden whiteness, but she said,—

‘Alas! I have no picture of our poor Oscar, and Georgine had none, to prove to you that he whom you describe is not Oscar, but another whom I have not seen, but who I know is Marcus Pancho—disguised, perhaps, as Oscar.’

But when the servant said she had seen you drink with the handsome stranger, to the health of some one you and he, laughingly, had named ‘Courtney,’ then, the man who loves you staggered to a chair, and bowed his head. We thought he had fainted; but, at the sound of Mrs. Edmonds’ voice, in a dazed way he looked at her.

‘This is outrageous!’ she cried, in a hard, fierce

tone. 'This, more than anything that we have heard, should convince you, Courtney, that it is not *our* Ellinore who could lose—unless she lose her senses—in coarse jests and coarse actions, the rare fineness of her nature! No, no, Courtney! whatever Ellinore has done to look like wrong of her own doing, she did it as she has often done strange things without her knowing—she did it in her sleep. The very fact that the letter says—as a hint to make us do so—that we will try to find first Oscar Lyndhurst, proves that it is Marcus Pancho we must find, and not Oscar.' And with an imperious look and gesture she dismissed the witnesses, who could take no meaning from her words, but who, pitying her, believed that grief had made her mind distraught.

Then, together, these two who love you, went next—as I thought they would do—to the office of the lawyer through whom they had sent their letters to Oscar Lyndhurst. And as they went, I followed. I knew they would hear the lawyer say that he knew no more than they, the whereabouts of Oscar; for Marcus had told him what to say. When they had seen the lawyer, they went to search the list of passengers who had sailed for Europe; and looking, found the names of 'Marcus Pancho and wife.'

'Alas! We are too late! They are already mar-

ried!’ cried Courtney, forgetting where he was, while great drops of anguish oozed from his pallid face.

Mrs. Edmonds looked at him reproachfully; but from the sudden brightening of her face when she had read the name of Marcus Pancho, I knew that she was happier now, that Courtney must believe with her, that it was Marcus, and not Oscar, whom they must seek.

‘Poor Courtney!’ she said. ‘You are not yourself—so brave, so reasonable; or you would not lose so soon your faith in Ellinore, or lose so soon your courage! Listen, Courtney, and believe through my believing—since you know no longer of yourself how to believe—that Ellinore, wherever she may be, if she be yet alive, is the same Ellinore—the soul of frankness and of purity; that she is true in her loving and her loyalty to you; that no matter what has happened, no matter what we yet may see, and yet may hear; until we see with our own eyes that she is happy with another, until we hear from her own lips that what she has written is true; until then—I shall believe that she is our Ellinore, and not another’s!’

Ellinore, hard and cold as my heart had become, I felt a pity for the man who loved you so—you, so wicked, as I then believed, and so unworthy of

his love—and admiration for the woman who could have such faith in the goodness of another woman, who could be so loyal to another woman, as Mrs. Edmonds had faith in you, as she was loyal to you.

The fact that Marcus had appeared openly with you, and the apparent boldness of your conduct with him, and of your preparations to go with him, had completely misled both Mrs. Edmonds and Courtney in regard to the manner of your disappearance. And instead of setting the detectives at work here, at once, which would have led to a knowledge of the facts, and to an investigation which would have precipitated your confinement in this underground prison, it was as Marcus had foreseen and provided for—they prepared at once to follow Marcus in the first steamer that followed his departure. I waited till they had sailed; and then, knowing there would be no danger for the present, I returned to this Asylum, where arrangements had been made for me to remain until advised by Marcus what to do. He had given Doctor Simmonds the strictest orders to provide everything needful for your comfort, and to keep from you all knowledge of the place wherein you are confined, until he should inform us that the search for you had been abandoned; as should the facts of your abduction and the place of your concealment be discovered, we

should, in case we had inflicted any cruel treatment upon you, suffer an additional penalty from the law. This is what I thought, then, was the only reason that Marcus desired you to be kindly treated; but I know, now, that while he hated you, he had also a mad desire to possess you wholly; and that it was this desire, above every other, that made him wish to preserve you in mind and in body. Had I known the truth then, had I even suspected it, believing still in your love for him, I do not know what, in my desperate hate of you, I might have done. You were in my power; for, as you supposed, my room was next to yours. The door—that you saw once, only—by which I entered your room, opens by the noiseless sliding of a panel; and often I came at night to look upon you in your sleep, and glided back without your knowing. Marcus had taught me how to hate you, and enough, that he could trust you to my keeping, knowing I would not pity.

And yet, Ellinore, it was not only because of the fear that by some means you would know me—even through the mystery of my disguise—that you did not oftener see me; it was also a dread, lest in my heart—that still had something of a woman's—some pity might spring up for you, and that I might do something that would make you less

unhappy than you were. The day you wandered from your room, and saw the hapless woman put within the iron cage, (she died, Ellinore, the woman you saw, without the terror that had caused her death; because, happily, she no longer kept her reason.) that day, I had been out all the afternoon. You were habitually so quiet, that I had become less watchful of you, and of those who had the care of you; and I was as much surprised as alarmed, when upon my return I found you in the hands of the two attendants, who of course believed you insane—as neither Doctor Simmonds nor myself could, without danger to ourselves, admit that you were sane; indeed, we had not admitted it to each other; and it was only with the promise to pay them an amount sufficiently large to recompense them for the sacrifice of the delight most dear to them—the delight they find in their cruel management of a refractory patient—that I succeeded in persuading them to abandon, in your case, the usual ‘treatment.’ After that, I knew your safety could only be assured, as it had been in the past, by your silence and pretended indifference to all about you. This, you remember, I tried, in the strongest manner, to impress upon you; and in observing, unperceived by you, your movements, I was convinced that you were wise enough to see the wisdom of my counsel,

and to insure your safety by following it. And it was fortunate for you that you were thus wise; for a short time after that you were deprived even of my protection; as it was then that I received a message from Marcus to come at once to London.

For while all this was happening to you, Mrs. Edmonds and Courtney were in pursuit of Marcus—who, of course, as soon as he had reached London, was not to be found either by the name of Marcus Pancho, or of Oscar Lyndhurst, but by another name—if found at all; and their search might have been an endless one, had Courtney shared the perfect faith of Mrs. Edmonds—who thought it an outrage even to seek for Oscar Lyndhurst with the thought that he might be culpable. But Courtney doubted; and until he had found Oscar, and had convinced himself that he was not the destroyer of his happiness—as you in your letter had declared him to be—he determined to seek, unknown to Mrs. Edmonds, as persistently and as thoroughly for Oscar, as she was seeking for Marcus. This double pursuit by Mrs. Edmonds and Courtney, each, without knowing it, for the same man, became embarrassing even for the adroit Marcus, and finally dangerous for him. It was then that he sent a message for me, and at the same time advised his lawyer in New York to send a telegram to Mrs. Edmonds, to the

effect that Oscar Lyndhurst was soon to arrive in London, and that he, the lawyer, had informed Oscar, also by cable, of their presence and address in London. This telegram was received by Mrs. Edmonds—as it was intended to be received—soon after my arrival in London.

As soon as Marcus had made known to me the situation, and the contemplated master stroke that was to put an end at the same time to the double pursuit of himself, and to the necessity of his concealment; and after he had explained to me the part that I was expected to play ; he went at once, with the message he had just received from his lawyer, to the address of Mrs. Edmonds, and at an hour when he was sure to find both her and Courtney at home. Announcing himself thus suddenly to them, with all the freedom of one who believes himself a beloved and privileged friend, and in the frankest, most cordial manner ; while he was profuse in his expressions of delight at seeing them, and of his surprise to learn, on his return from a long stay in Russia, that they were in London ; all this, that was the perfection of acting, rejoiced the heart of Mrs. Edmonds. This sudden return of him she knew as Oscar Lyndhurst, his first, frank, spontaneous utterances, his entire manner, must prove at once to Courtney the injustice of his suspicions. But

imagine her still greater delight, when she saw with what apparent amazement and horror the pseudo Oscar read the letter that you had written to them, without once appearing to suspect that either Mrs. Edmonds or Courtney had ever, even for a moment, believed in the truth of the letter in regard to himself; imagine all this—which Marcus gayly rehearsed to me on his return—and you will not be surprised to learn that Courtney, in dread lest ‘Oscar’ should suspect that he had suspected him, took as effectual means to stop all search for him, as he had taken to find him.

And now, Ellinore, comes the supreme scene in this long and startling drama; the scene in which the talent of this marvelous actor reached the perfection of excellence: when with a sublime generosity, with an enthusiasm that put theirs to shame, he offered to help them in their search for Marcus Pancho; to help them, think of it, Ellinore,—to search for himself; and he set to work with a zeal that was, apparently, the result of a determination to succeed.

The evening of the day of your abduction, Ellinore, when I preceded your coming to this Asylum, in order to arrange your room, Marcus had given me special orders to take from your wardrobe a walking-suit, and a dress for the Opera, with the accom-

panying paraphernalia—all of which had been made expressly for you—and to keep them in my possession until he should demand them. When I went to London, I had, by his orders, taken these with me. Evidently, the entire plan—of which in the execution he succeeded to a marvelous degree—had been conceived before your abduction, and every possible contingency provided for; for the first step he took in his pretended search for Marcus Pancho, was to provide himself, from Mrs. Edmonds, with a list of the gowns you would be likely to wear.

And then, Ellinore, I came upon the scene—I as you. We are of the same height, you and I, and of the same proportion. My hair, too, is like your's—the same hue of blackness. Then a man was found who, well paid, called himself Marcus Pancho. And on a certain day, when, by appointment, Marcus—as 'Oscar' Lyndhurst—accompanied Mrs. Edmonds to a gallery of bric-a-brac, we—the false Marcus and I—having been advised when to appear, came out from the entrance of the gallery, and met Mrs. Edmonds and the pretended Oscar. I wore your walking dress, with the gloves, and bonnet, and wrap—all of which Mrs. Edmonds recognized, for she had ordered them for you; and with the veil close drawn about my face, she believed me to be you; while I, to confirm the truth of what she

thought, started back, drawing my veil yet closer. And then she called me by your name; but when with outstretched hands she came towards me, I, with feigned trepidation drew back, then stepped aside, passed by her, and hurrying out, took refuge in the carriage that waited for us, and that bore us quickly from her sight.

As far as we could see, the woman was gazing still at our fleeing carriage. And yet, Ellinore, even after this, all faith in your goodness was not dead in her. 'Not till I see her, and hear from her own lips that she loves this Marcus Pancho, and that she is happy with him, will I believe that she, with her own will, has wronged thus me and Courtney!' This she said, though pallid and in tears, to the false Oscar; while she bade him find you—you and Marcus. This, too, the real Marcus repeated to me, with an immense delight at the success of his scheme. As he was entrusted now with the management of the means of discovery, he proposed to amuse himself, so long as it should please him to do so, with a variety of comedies, with the idea of eventually putting an end to the affair, by causing the sudden disappearance of the false Marcus and Ellinore. In the meantime, he, of course, would not permit Mrs. Edmonds the opportunity of a personal interview—which she had determined to have—

with the supposed Ellinore. But for once this fortunate actor was forced to play a part he had not expected to play.

Some days after this—my first personation of you—the so-called Oscar reported to Mrs. Edmonds, that with the help of a detective he had succeeded in tracing Marcus Pancho, and that he was living, under another name, with a woman who was supposed to be his wife; and that he had succeeded, by bribing the maid—who had informed him, at the same time, that she could admit no one that was not provided with a card of appointment—that her master and mistress were going to the Opera that evening; and that she also gave him the number of their box, and that he forthwith had procured seats for Mrs. Edmonds and himself for the same evening, in a box on the opposite side of the house, hoping by that means—as he represented to Mrs. Edmonds—that she might see you, if it were indeed you, face to face. Courtney, when he had been informed by Mrs. Edmonds of her unexpected sight of you, was at first prostrated by the effect of a discovery that he considered the final proof of your guilt, and afterwards became seriously ill; so that Mrs. Edmonds went to the Opera alone with him she knew as Oscar Lyndhurst.

When we entered the Opera, Mrs. Edmonds and

Marcus were already there. I kept the hood of my cloak closely drawn about my averted face, as I passed into the box. At the first sight of me—Marcus afterwards informed me—Mrs. Edmonds recognized the gown, and cloak, and fan—the entire dress, as yours; and, with a suppressed exclamation, her face became deadly pale. Once in the box, as it was agreed upon, the man with me, who personated Marcus, seated himself in such a manner, that half hidden as I already was by the drapery of the box, it was impossible for Mrs. Edmonds to get a recognizable view of my face. But not once did her eyes wander from the place where I sat; and I began to feel uncomfortable under the fixedness of her gaze, and to wish myself safely out of her sight; and before the last notes of the closing opera had died away, I arose, and again effectually concealing my face, I passed out with my companion. But sudden and rapid as had been my movements, Mrs. Edmonds had left as suddenly, and more rapidly, her box, and had gone out by the exit nearest her, at the same time that we passed out by the one nearest us; and as I reached the outer entrance leading into the street, in the full light of the brilliantly burning lamps, I felt an arm about me, and at the same moment that your name was pronounced, the hood of my cloak was pulled from my face, and with

one glance at me, and with a low cry, the woman who had from the first been so brave—fainted. Fainted, Ellinore, from very joy that I was not you; that she might still believe in you, still be faithful to you. Marcus, white with anger, came promptly to the aid of Mrs. Edmonds; while I, with my astonished companion, passed out and was driven rapidly away.

Of course this ended the ‘amusement’ in an unexpected way for Marcus; and, as Oscar Lyndhurst, he decided with Mrs. Edmonds and Courtney—the latter having recovered, after the last fortunate discovery by Mrs. Edmonds, from his illness—that you had been the victim of some deep laid plot; and after some delay in their efforts to find me, and to get possession of the gowns that Mrs. Edmonds was firm in her belief were yours, and of the information that it was to be supposed I possessed concerning you, they decided to return to New York, and, with the aid of detectives, to thoroughly investigate the matter from the first hour of your disappearance. The delay—that Marcus prolonged in every possible way—that was the result of their search for me, enabled me to precede their coming to America, and to execute, without interruption, the plan of Marcus as he had instructed me to do. This plan was to have an underground room pre-

pared for you, directly under the room you then occupied, and with no other entrance to it except through a trap-door. This underground room—to which you, and all that belonged to you, could be removed at a short notice—was to be occupied only in the event of Mrs. Edmonds' and Courtney's discovery of the fact of your abduction, and their coming to this Asylum in search of you.

The necessity to conceal you here, came sooner than we had anticipated; for Courtney, believing now as implicitly as Mrs. Edmonds that you had been foully dealt with, employed every means, as well as his own time and energy, to bring to light the mystery of your disappearance, and the place of your concealment. The fact of the abduction as it had occurred on the day of your disappearance, was discovered; and one of the individuals who had interfered at the moment of your seizure, having been found, his description of you—all that he could see of you, for you were closely veiled—led Mrs. Edmonds and Courtney to suspect it was you; and the fact that the man had been shown a certificate of insanity, led them still further to believe that you had been confined in an insane asylum; but as they learned nothing more than the mere fact of the abduction, and could discover no trace of you—or of her they supposed to be you—they decided to

make a thorough search through all the asylums in the land.

Ellinore, you were not wrong in thinking that I pitied you the evening you were brought here to this you call your 'tomb-like' prison. After my return from abroad, I took again my old habit of gliding through the paneled door to your room, to watch you as you slept, unconscious of my presence. You were so pale, so changed, so suffering. You were so wholly in the power of those who hated you, that I set myself to thinking of your love for Marcus, and of his hate of you. I had then no room in my heart for envy; for Marcus had never been, even in the first days of our loving, so tender and so kind, so much a lover to me, as he had been through all the weeks that I had been with him in London. 'She loves him, too,' I thought, 'even as I love him; and she must know, as I now know, how bad at heart he is. Perhaps it was his wicked doing that made her bad; and if she has made me suffer, for the man I love, she owes to him also her suffering, with no recompense from him for whom she suffers, but suffering; while, if he can love at all, he must love me; and if one can be made happy by his loving, I am happy now, while she is wretched.' So I thought, and pitied you—for one can more easily pity when one is happy, knowing that the one one hates is not.

It was no fancy, Ellinore, that caused you such an agony of pain in thinking that you heard the footsteps and the voices of those who loved you, overhead. Three days after you were brought here, your friend, and your lover came, armed with authority to search each habitable room in this asylum. We had made of your room, a sitting-room—sliding back the paneled door, and draping the entrance, that it might seem a part of mine; while I, the occupant, was to appear the victim of a harmless madness.’ Ah, Ellinore, how strange we humans can not see the truth that often is so near for us to see! Mrs. Edmonds glanced compassionately at me; but from my disguise of gray hair and colored glasses, looked nothing to reveal to her that she had followed me for weeks, believing I was you; and that, at last, the sight of my poor face unveiled and undisguised, had brought her back to hopefulness and to her faith in you. She walked about the room, commended its tastefulness and comfort, and then passed out. But Courtney lingered for a moment, with a troubled look upon his face, going from place to place, and standing once before the grated window where you had so often stood, as if, by some strange instinct of his loving, he felt the impress of where you had been, as you, by that same instinct, felt that he was near.

After this visit, of those who were in search of you, to this Asylum, to the room where you had been, we felt that our safety for the present was secured; but so long as they were searching for you in other Asylums, we concluded that it would be wise to keep you in the effectual concealment of this unknown and unsuspected prison. It was at this time that Doctor Simmonds, having been called away from his duties, requested me to visit, during his absence, a patient who was seriously ill, and who he said was one of the 'harmless' cases. It was during one of these visits to this patient, that I saw the locket, which was a rare one, and precisely like one I had seen about your neck; and I was curious to know something about it, or at least what the poor, witless being who wore it, would say of it. When I asked him to tell me about the locket, and something about himself, he looked at me amazed, that any one should speak to him, and speak as though caring to hear what he might say. And, Ellinore, although it was precisely on the subject of himself—his past, his history—that Doctor Simmonds assured me he was most insane; yet, before he had half finished his recital, I divined the truth—that he was your father, and that he was not mad.

You know what I had already learned from Marcus of his own history, and of the woman you had long

known as your mother, and of you. Marcus had also told me that your father's name was Reginald Trevalyn; he did not say, and I am sure he did not know, that it was Sir Reginald; and I had always fancied him, your father, a poor adventurer, and you the child of a pauper—seeing you had found no other guardian for your orphanage than the wretched woman you called your mother. Marcus believed your father dead—so you believed. But he was not dead; and the woman who had told you both this falsehood, knew that he was living, and not dead. For the mother of Marcus was, I knew—even while your father told his story—the woman who, hating him whom she once had loved, had first wrought the ruin of all he loved, and then—in the sickness of his sorrow, and half dead—had brought him here; and still hating you for the father's sake, had taught Marcus to hate you, and dying, had made him promise, without his knowing why—so he had told me—to put you here. But Marcus had been deceived too; for the tale that your father told to me, was not the same that Marcus had told to me. Why had his mother kept from him the truth? What was the mystery? Or what if Marcus had not told me the truth even as he knew it? What if from the first I had been by him misled? What if in knowing the story of Marcus' life, and yours,

as you could tell it, I should know otherwise than I had known it—and know you perhaps less culpable, and him more wicked? These, Ellinore, and other questions that Heaven sent in answer to your praying, came to me to turn my mind toward the truth, that knowing it, I might help you. And so I came to place the pencils and the paper in your room, hoping that in your fear of madness you would write for a distraction, and perhaps say something that would help me to know if I was rightly knowing, or, if not, help me to know the truth.

In the meantime, I was curious to know what Doctor Simmonds knew of your father's history, and of yours. From him, by questioning, I knew I should learn nothing; and perhaps, by being curious, would suggest to him a caution that would keep me from all ways of knowing. For did he know your father was not insane, and that you were not, for his own safety he would say you both were mad. So I reasoned, and after deliberating for some time, I determined to gratify my curiosity another way. I knew that Doctor Simmonds kept all his important papers and his private correspondence in a cabinet that was in a small room back of the library. He had frequently employed me to answer letters at his dictation, and sometimes had left his lectures for me to copy while he was absent from the

Asylum. I succeeded in having a false key made that would open the cabinet; and taking advantage of the opportunity that his absence afforded me, I opened the cabinet, and found therein all the proofs that were necessary to show that Sir Reginald Trevalyn had been confined here by the order of the woman who was Marcus Pancho's mother, and with the consent of a distant kinsman of your father—who was then occupying the estate and the title of your father; and that all who had known your father—except these two and Doctor Simmonds—believed him dead; and that a handsome income had been paid regularly to Doctor Simmonds to insure his discretion, and to secure the comfortable support of his distinguished patient. These letters—in which the writer had always been careful to speak of your father as insane—later, when the time came for me to use them, and after consulting with your father, I sent, with a letter from your father, to Chauncy Arnold—one of England's ablest lawyers, and who had been your father's dearest friend—with the request to keep their contents, as well as his own investigations of the affair, a secret from every one until we should advise him when to make them known.

Weeks passed, and months, in which I saw no more your father; but I kept the story he had told

to me, and the knowledge I had learned of him, a secret; and troubled, I knew not why, and wondering, I waited. Then came the astounding revelation, for which, not knowing, I had waited. The revelation that enabled me to see Marcus Pancho as he is; that showed to me, unbrightened, the blackness of his soul; that effaced, in one moment, the blind idolatry of years for him, and left, in its stead, a deadly hatred. Marcus had come here for the night; and we—Doctor Simmonds, Marcus and I—had talked until a late hour, when, at last bidding them good-night, I went to my room. I had been there a short time, when it occurred to me that I had forgotten to say something to Marcus that was necessary to say, and thinking that I might forget it, as he was going away at an early hour the next morning, I left my room with the intention of seeing him. I found the door of the library almost closed; and seeing no light in it, and only a feeble one in the room beyond, I hesitated, and was about to retrace my steps, when I heard the sound of Marcus' voice in words that made me start and, trembling, turn back. The voice came from the small room that is back of the library; and pushing the door softly open, I glided into the library, and secreting myself behind the thick drapery of a window, I heard, without being seen, every word.

‘I repeat it, Doctor Simmonds, there is only one way to end this deucedly disagreeable situation—that is every day becoming more embarrassing, and more difficult to maintain—in a manner that will be satisfactory to me, and that will, at the same time, rid me of the hounds that are, without their knowing it, incessantly in pursuit of me; the way that I intended it from the first to end; that is—to marry Ellinore, and have the right to claim her.’

‘Certainly, certainly, Pancho! I agree with you, that the only way to possess the girl in safety, is to marry her. But how are you going to induce a woman who hates you, to marry you?’

‘Of course, my dear Doctor, I know that Ellinore will never consent, of her own will, to marry me; but I know how to make her consent against her will, or to make her marry me without consenting to do it. I shall tell her that she must submit to a confinement for life in the underground room where she now is, or accept her freedom by becoming my wife. I believe she will consent, in the secret hope of escaping from me—once she is my wife and out of prison; but if she will not consent, I shall make use of her malady—that has never yet disappointed me—to bring about the desired end.’

‘And, Pancho, suppose you should succeed, as you

hope, nay, believe you will succeed, have you reflected upon the unpleasant results to me, as well as to yourself should the facts of the case be made known, as they certainly will be—even should you be able to keep them concealed—by the other woman, who is madly in love with you, and who, when you have undeceived her, and abandoned her—as you will be obliged to do—will spare no means that will insure her as satisfactory revenge.'

'Assure yourself, Doctor, that I have prepared for every emergency, and for every event that is possible to occur. As to my own part in the matter, I shall prevent all disagreeable happenings for yourself, and for me, by keeping Ellinore—after our marriage—still concealed for weeks, and if necessary for months, in her present unsuspected prison; only, instead of one prisoner, you will have two; for, as her husband, I shall share her prison with her, until we can in safety leave it. Then, once out of it, and out of America, I shall take my wife—and, trust me, with no chance of escape—to some corner of the globe where I may securely enjoy the sweets of married life. As for the 'other woman' and of course you mean Mabel Livingston—she is a weak, half crazy fool, and I have had too much of her; too much of her even as the tool she has been for me—a tool for which I have paid too dear, in having to feign love where I hate. And

yet, a little longer I must endure this cursed bondage; a little longer I shall have need of Mabel, even to the end—until she, with her own hands, shall put within my arms, my Ellinore. And then, even in that moment of my happiness, she, poor dupe, will find herself, not knowing why, nor that it is my doing, shut up, for life, within the prison that once was Ellinore's—or in one less pleasant, that we shall have made ready for her. You are convinced now, Doctor Simmonds, that we shall have nothing to fear from the revenge of Mabel Livingston?'

'You are very clever, Pancho,—devilish clever! But how are you going to bring it all about—this villainy that is yet only in your mind?'

'I shall bring it about more easily than you imagine; but, of course, I must have your aid. During my next visit, which will be in eight or ten days, I shall inform Mabel that I have another plot in readiness for the punishment of the woman she hates—and believes that I hate. She will make a *fête* of the day on which I shall make the announcement to her. Then, when the time comes for the consummating of my plans—which will come when we, Mrs. Edmonds, Courtney Ellerton and I, have made a raid upon every insane asylum in the land, in search of Ellinore—I shall come here, and tell Mabel that everything is ready, and ask

her to bring up, on a certain day, the fair Ellinore to her old room—that was her first prison. Mabel will obey, as she has always done, without a questioning word. In the meantime I shall be in the library with you; and when Mabel comes to say that Ellinore awaits me, I shall propose to drink—from the already filled and waiting glasses—to the success of my plot. You, of course, will have drugged the wine in Mabel's glass, with the powerful narcotic that you alone know how to prepare—the narcotic that was so effectual in its aid to bring Ellinore here—and as soon as the drug has produced its effect, I will leave you to do the rest with Mabel—that is, to rid me effectually of her—while I shall delight Ellinore by my unexpected appearance before her. Once in her presence, I shall make the proposition at once; and no matter what her decision may be, then and there, with her consent or without it, the marriage ceremony—for which I shall have made all the arrangements—will be performed. After the marriage we shall remain here for a time in concealment, or go at once, if we may safely go, abroad.'

What they said after that, was simply comments upon what I have already told you, and then they talked of other things. While I, mad with a horrible pain, and burning with the fever of a new, fierce hate, stole out of the library, and reached,

somehow, my room. It was then that I thought of your manuscript—for I knew that you had written day after day, for months—and late as it was, I came here while you slept, and taking the manuscript, I read it, that same night, from the beginning to the end. And, Ellinore, its perusal, with the horrible impression of what I had overheard in the library, turned my heart to stone. Learning then, for the first time, how cruelly I had wronged you, in fatally wronging myself, I have had since then but one desire—a consuming, haunting, maddening desire—to avenge your wrong and to avenge my own. And in reading what you had written, I believed that I had found already the means, an effectual means, to insure that revenge. For I suspected that which Marcus had never suspected; and which, if you had once suspected it, during the recital of the story told to you by Marcus' mother, you had, at an assurance from her, dismissed forever the thought from you as impossible to be true; but which, if your father had not omitted a part of the story in relating it to me, I should not only have suspected it long before, but I should have known—*that it is impossible for Marcus, either by fair means or foul, to marry you.*

As soon as I had finished the reading, I went with feverish haste to the room of your father—the door

of which I opened with the key of my own—and not only surprised him by the unexpected appearance of myself, but by asking him if he indeed bore upon his breast the marks of a cross and anchor. And when for my answer he showed them to me, I knew then that Marcus Pancho's mother had told both him and you only a part of the truth; and that the child that was the result of your father's unfortunate intimacy with her, had not died; but that Marcus Pancho was that child—the son of your father, and not the son, as Marcus yet believed, of a nameless, unknown father. Ellinore, I knew then the truth—that *Marcus Pancho is your half brother*; and drunken with a dreadful joy, I gave the manuscript to your father, and bade him read, first the story of his own life—told to you by the mother of Marcus—as you have written it; and then I told him what I know: that Marcus Pancho bears too, upon his breast, the marks of a blood-red cross, and the anchor like his own, in blue, that he himself had marked upon the boy, that he might know him as his son, and the boy know him as father. And then I placed a miniature of Marcus before your father's eyes; while he, astonished, touched a secret spring in the locket, and showed me a portrait of himself taken in his early youth. And, Ellinore, as your face is the exact likeness of

your mother's, so the face of Marcus is the perfect likeness of this picture of your father's. This explains the vague resemblance, that was inexplicable to you, of your father to some one you had seen; and this is why your father refused to show you this picture of himself in the locket; you would have recognized the resemblance, and divined the truth—which he wished you to learn later, from me. But, for the rest, it is only the face of Marcus that is like your father; Marcus himself possesses entirely the evil nature of his evil mother: while you—as Marcus' mother often assured you, are like your father in disposition and temperament. The deadly hatred of the woman for you, doubtless prompted her to keep your relationship to Marcus a secret, in the fear that, should he know the truth, he would—even bad as he is—revolt against a revenge so horrible as that which she contemplated for you—a life-long incarceration in this Asylum; while he, on his part, kept his passion for you a secret, rather than give her the pain of knowing that to his hate of you, for her sake, was allied an unconquerable passion for you, which would only turn to hate, as fierce as hers, once he should know he could not make you his. For, Ellinore, the one impress that Heaven left, in trying to make of him a man—this devil—was his love for

her, despite her vileness and her misery, whom he in secret called his mother.

When your father had finished the reading of the entire manuscript, we consulted together, and decided upon what we believed to be the quickest and most efficient means to accomplish all that we wished to accomplish. It was then that he wrote a complete statement of all the facts regarding himself, which I sent—with the letters I had taken from Doctor Simmonds' cabinet—to Chauncey Arnold. And from that time, in anticipation of the day and hour for which Marcus was making ready—the day and hour that is to make you, as he believes, securely his, and that is at the same time to rid him effectually of me—for that day and hour I have worked day and night, to accomplish first a revenge worthy of his wronging of you, and afterwards a revenge worthy of his wronging of me. To perfect every arrangement that I desired to make ; to secure at the very moment of your triumph, the triumph of your father ; to bring certain persons here whom I wish to bring, without the knowledge of Marcus ; to secure the freedom of my own movements ; in short, to insure the complete success of my contemplated revenge—it was absolutely necessary to have, not only the consent, but the aid of Doctor Simmonds. This aid I expected to compel him to give to your

father, and to you, by showing him the letters I had received from Chauncy Arnold in regard to your father, and by informing him that I had heard the whole of the conversation between him and Marcus. But, to my amazement, he betrayed no surprise at the knowledge I possessed; and when I had made known to him my plans, promised to give me all the assistance I should require of him.

The truth was, he had already heard from the kinsman of Sir Reginald Trevalyn, to the effect that he, the kinsman, had been advised by Chauncy Arnold what course to take that would the soonest, and with the least scandal, restore all rights to Sir Reginald, and at the same time secure a certain protection for himself. And Doctor Simmonds had also wisely concluded that the only way to preserve the immaculateness of his own reputation—which outside of the Asylum he always managed to preserve—was to admit of no conscious culpability on his part, nor of his knowledge of it on the part of any one else. ‘There was no proof,’ he said, ‘that he knew your father was sane when he was confined here, or that he suspected that those who had put him here knew. Both he and, as far as he knew, the kinsman of Sir Reginald, had been simply the instruments of the woman’s revenge. She alone knew the truth—and she was dead. The man who

had proved himself to be Sir Reginald Trevalyn, had been confined here while suffering from a nervous malady. This malady had been for years carefully treated, while he, Sir Reginald, had been carefully attended, and provided with every needful comfort; now that he was 'cured,' it was natural that his friends should wish to take him from the Asylum.'

He took a similar view of your case: 'Marcus Pancho had sworn to him,' he said, 'that you were insane, and had given him a certificate to that effect. He had known only what Marcus had represented to him as the facts of the case; but now that I had proved to him the badness of Marcus, he was ready—as he had always been known to be—to assist in maintaining the cause of justice and of truth.'

This, Ellinore, was the substance of Doctor Simmonds' explanation to me in regard to your father and you, offered with the unembarrassed readiness of one who is always ready for any emergency. And I am convinced, that no matter what you and I may think, or know of Doctor Simmonds, he is clever enough to have protected himself from all blame, and from all proof, even from us, of his culpability; and that we shall be wise to leave him to a punishment that is not of our bringing about; for

he has been useful to us, he will yet be useful to us ; we shall have need of him to the end—to the hour that will secure to you your happiness, and assure me my revenge.

All is arranged now, Ellinore. Through Doctor Simmonds I have been advised of Marcus' every movement, and of the day when he expects to consummate his plans in regard to you—and to me.

I have left nothing undone. For my own satisfaction, I had an interview with Doctor H———, who confirms all that you have written in regard to the hypnotic phenomena of which you have been the unfortunate victim.

I have seen Mrs. Edmonds and Courtney Ellerton. It was difficult to convince Mrs. Edmonds that the man she had known as Oscar Lyndhurst, was Marcus Pancho. The double identity had been so cleverly managed, and so long concealed, that the truth was astounding to her. But Courtney accepted it the more readily, that many things which he had noted from the beginning, and throughout the startling drama, that he could not satisfactorily explain to himself, now—looking back upon them through the light of truth—explained themselves.

Chauncy Arnold is in New York, armed with official authority, should there be any opposition, to

liberate your father, and to restore him to his position and his estate in England. All your friends are waiting only for the message from me that will advise them when to come. That message is sent, Ellinore. Marcus Pancho came last night. He was all tenderness, all love—believing that he has duped me to the last; and from no word or look, or action of mine, in his presence, could he suspect that with all the madness of my once loving him, I am now hating him. It was last night that he told me he had a surprise in store for me, and that I should bring you up to your old room to-morrow morning; when, after seeing you alone, he would inform me of all that he had done, and of all that he proposed yet to do; adding, that when I should know all, I would have more reason than ever to commend his clever management of you. I heard all he had to say, with a visible exultation at the thought of my own cherished and unsuspected revenge—an exultation that he mistook for the signs of rejoicing, that I had always shown at each new promise of a misfortune to you.

Marcus has been all the morning with Doctor Simmonds, talking over the arrangements that he has made—in which he expects Doctor Simmonds to take part—for to-morrow, for the last scene in the last act of his drama—for which I also have made

other arrangements, that it may end my way, and not his.

We shall have many surprises for this surprising actor, who has so often and so greatly surprised others. I will come for you to-morrow, Ellinore, at the hour designated by Marcus. You will not wear the simple white gown, such as you now wear. I have your bridal robe—a thing of beauty, that came from Paris for you, the day after your mysterious disappearance. Mrs. Edmonds has given it to me, for you, Ellinore, and you will wear it—your wedding-gown—to-morrow. Only you will wear over it, to effectually conceal it, a long wrap of soft, light texture, for which, to apologize for the wearing, say you are chilly, and have need of it.

When I shall have taken you to your old room, to-morrow, I shall leave you to drink the ‘drugged wine—’ so Marcus will believe—with him and Doctor Simmonds—who will feign, to the last, to be the friend of Marcus, that he may, in truth, befriend you. And in these minutes, while Marcus is drinking to the health of his own dark purpose, you will know, Ellinore, that I shall be drinking to your near happiness, and—to my near revenge. Then pitying his impatience, I shall not delay to feign a deep unconsciousness—the quick work of the drug—and Marcus, leaving me to the care of Doctor Simmonds,

will go to you. And when he stands before you, Ellinore, exultant in the thought that you will soon be his; you, knowing the truth, must not look the joy you feel, the triumph you are soon to have; you must seem the joyless, the despairing, the lifeless Ellinore—all that you through long months were, all that Marcus believes you are. He will at once make the proposition, which you already know, and which you will receive in sullen silence; a silence that he will take for your consent—a consent born of your despair. And then, at a signal given by him, your door will open, and the clergyman—chosen by Marcus to perform the marriage rite—will enter, followed by Doctor Simmonds. But do not be afraid, even in that seeming dread moment; for I shall be near you, and your friends who love you best, will be near you; you shall be restored to them, you will be happy with them.

And, Ellinore, you have no time to lose. I have the promise of Doctor Simmonds to keep Marcus with him the entire day; but it is now late in the afternoon, and Marcus may have need of me; and, to the last, I must be ready to receive him when he seeks me, and feign a gladness when he comes. Come! let us put your gowns and linen, and all that belongs to you, in your trunk. There must be nothing left to do to-morrow."

Then, seeing that I did not move, and did not speak, a great terror looked from her eyes.

“Speak, Ellinore! Speak!” she cried, taking a fierce hold of me. “Heaven forbid! that you should fall a victim to your strange malady, and at the very hour that brings the sweets of my revenge most near, keep them from me! For, who knows but—if you are other than your healthful and wise self—that in some way, with the dreadful sureness of his evil planning, Marcus may yet triumph, and help for us may come too late?”

At the beginning of her recital, Mabel had forbidden me to interrupt her; and throughout the greater part of it I had sat silent and motionless—save to utter, from time to time, an exclamation of wonder, of pain, of horror, of joy. But her latest words, the words that told me I was soon to leave this prison—I, with my father—so soon to look again upon dear, living life, and the dear faces of those I loved—who so loved me; to hear this, to know this; the glad sense of all I thought, of all I felt, was so overpowering, that I could neither speak nor move, but dumbly waited for a strength and calmness I had not—until I felt the grasp of Mabel’s hand upon my arm: and then the fear I took from her terror, lest by my own fault I should undo her doing, started anew the halting life within my veins to flow on in

its own right way. Then, in a quiet way, I spoke; and Mabel was content. And in a little while we had neatly parceled all that had made of my prison something of a home—all that is now my prison luggage. We made every preparation for my departure, so that we shall have nothing to do to-morrow, and then Mabel left me.

It is now past midnight. I have written all that I have to write. However, I cannot sleep this night—the last night that I shall pass within the silence and gloom of this that has been so long my prison, and that once I thought would be my tomb; this last night, that is now the beginning of a glad day—the first day of a new glad life. And not yet will I lay me down, even for repose; not till I have humbly knelt in reverential and ecstatic gratitude to Him, the Allwise, the Allgood, who has led me through His way—a way that to my human eyes seemed too suffering to be good—to this that must be, with my father and my husband, a life of precious newness and of undreamed of joy.

MAY 30TH. I am not to look again upon the face of the manlike woman. This assurance was my earliest joy of this—that is to be a day of joy for me. Mabel herself came, at an early hour, with my breakfast, and to tell me that her plans were

progressing precisely as she wished them to do, and that I would not see her again until she was sent to me by Marcus.

So I am waiting. In a little while I shall leave this prison—this that I so long believed I should never leave, except as dead! In a little while I shall see the blessed sunlight of God's blessed day! In a little while I shall see, for always, my father and Mrs. Edmonds! In a little while I shall find again, and find to keep forever, my love—my Courtney! Let him who can, tell all that I have felt within the last waiting hours, all that I now feel of hope, of thankfulness—for I can not!

It is now twelve o'clock. Everything is arranged. All whom Mabel expected are here—hidden away in some room of this house of many rooms. I suspect there is a surprise in store for me; and that I shall see some other friendly faces, besides those I expect to see. Mabel came half an hour ago, and brought my wedding-gown—a dainty, exquisite gown, odorous of orange blossoms—and I am dressed for my marriage. The bridal veil, Mabel says, will be ready for me the moment it is needed.

Was there ever so strange a picture as this—this gloomy, silent prison, transformed into a *boudoir* for a bride?

From where I write I can look into the mirror. It is a white, white face I see—so long it has been hidden from the sunlight. But—yes—it is a lovely one. I may say this—for it is my mother's face I think of when I look on mine, and not my own.

Mabel is pale; even in the warm lamp light she is ghastly pale, with the dreadful redness still on either cheek. Her eyes that—since I have seen her as she now is—have never ceased to flame with a strange, fierce glow, burn more strangely now, and with a fiercer light. There is a dreadful calmness in her movements and her gaze. What if she nurse some deadly purpose in her soul—a purpose hidden from me?

Only a minute more—to put away this manuscript, to close my trunk, that later will be brought to me. Only a half minute—to glance once more about the gloomy prison, and, in the twinkling of an eye, to think of all I have suffered here, to think of the gladness that now I feel, to look about me, and now to say—farewell!

CHAPTER VII.

JUNE 30TH. It is just one month since my strangest of wedding-days. No woman, no wife, was ever so happy as I am. Other women, other wives, have been as much loved as I am loved, and have had as much to make them happy as I have had to make me happy. But the extraordinary experiences of my past—extraordinary in their horribleness, in their pain; the cruel robbery for so long a time of all I had to love, of all that made my happiness—the memory of this, makes me to feel a joy in being loved, in being once more happy, that no other one can feel. So, too, long buried in my tomblike prison, with no single hope to see again this earth of life, no one, so well as I, can know how good it is to live. I can not breathe enough the outer, open air, that with each respiration I send back a prayer of thankfulness that I am yet living, and not dead.

I have not had an hour, before this, to finish these pages as they should be finished. I do not like to write now; writing was so much a part of my buried prison, and my thoughts go wandering to the dear life about me. Mrs. Edmonds is near me now; Courtney is still nearer, and from time to time, with

a light caress, helps me to the task that lies before me.

Everything happened, that morning of mornings, as we had expected, and as Mabel had arranged it to happen—even the horrible thing that happened to Mabel, and that only she must have prepared for and expected.

The moment we had ascended to the room, that had been my first prison, Mabel—who was in her old disguise—left me; and in a little while Marcus came. Remembering Mabel, I shivered, as if from cold, and drew the long wrap close about me, to hide more surely my wedding-gown.

He was not changed. Handsome, audacious, cruel, wicked: the same Marcus—the same devil. He said his will, and I—again remembering Mabel—made no answer, but sat in sullen silence, as if despairing. My manner pleased him. There was no scene, no resistance. I am sure he found it easier than he could have hoped, to work his purpose, and that it was useless to waste time in threats that were not needed; and so he gave the signal. Then through the open door came first the florid faced, the dead white handed man—that was no less a villain to me, that now, for his own safety, he saw best to be my father's friend, and mine,—and then the clergyman, chosen by Marcus. These came, and

the rite—that was then a wicked one—went on until the words,—“If any one know why this marriage should not be, so let him speak!”

And quick the panel slid back from the hidden door-way of my room, and a firm voice—that came with each word nearer—responded,—

“*I, as the father of this woman, forbid it!*” and now quite near, he placed his arm about me. “*I, as the father also of that man, forbid it!*” and with a stern gaze, pointing, he looked at Marcus, “Look!—Marcus Pancho!” he added, baring then his bosom; “look upon this cross and anchor—the marks that you too bear upon your bosom; the cross that marked you mine from your birth, the anchor that my own hands made—that I might know you always as my son, and you know me as father!”

Then Marcus, amazed, and trembling at the truth that was for him a terror, with a changed voice gasped,—

“And if—if you are indeed my father, who is here to prove the lie that you are the father also of—of this woman I would make my wife? Who will say that you are Reginald Trevalyn—ah, trickster—who?”

And, for his answer, my father glanced toward the sliding panel.

“I!—”and towards us came the noble presence of a stranger. “I, Chauncy Arnold, your father’s friend and lawyer!”

“And I!—” this from the florid faced, the dead white handed man. “I too am here to say the truth: that this man is Reginald Trevalyn, Sir Reginald—now I know—who was confined here years ago, for treatment, by the woman who was not Sir Reginald’s wife, but yet who was your mother!”

Marcus was vanquished. With his quick perception he felt that at last he knew the truth; and that his mother had taught him to believe a lie. “Go!” he said to the clergyman; “there will be no marriage.”

He was himself again; and, with a matchless coolness, faced us smiling, bowed—and turned from our presence; but started back, trembling, and livid; as entering face to face with him, as he receded, came a tall form all draped in black—in dead, funereal black. Each of us felt the awful *something* that we saw upon the woman’s face; the woman herself, was Mabel Livingston.

“Nay,” she said in a voice of dreadful calmness, “there will be a marriage! Here is the waiting bride!—” and fastening the bridal veil about my head, she laid her hand on me. “And here is the bride-groom!—” pointing then at Courtney. “And

there the holy man, chosen by good people, to make these two—loving, and long waiting hearts—one! And there are the friends to witness, and to bless this marriage!” And while she spoke, she signaled each one as he came; first—and following Courtney—the holy man with face of holy sweetness. Then Mrs. Edmonds and Ned—one in glad tears, the other faintly smiling. And then—for my surprise—my old time friend, my childhood’s and my first youth’s friend—Mr. Sinclair. Nearest to me and Courtney stood the noble stranger, linked arm in arm, in brother closeness, to my father. All these, the friends most dear to me, stood grouped about me, waiting to look on the solemn joy—for it could be no other joy, in this sad place, and after our long and dreadful parting—of our strange marriage.

Marcus stood alone, vanquished, gloomy; looking for once the hate of a Mephistophiles, and not of a lower devil. And there, with my hand in Courtney’s, pledging in sweet and prayerful words my love and life to him; I felt, for the first time, the only time in all my life, a pity for the dark souled man that rested like a shadow upon the scene, and that, without my looking, I could see before me. Near him stood Mabel; and when the rite was done, I looked at her, and not alone; for every eye was

turned upon the face whereon we saw again the awful something, for which—forgetting the bridegroom and the bride—with fear in our eyes, and with bated breath, we waited.

“See!” she said, in the same voice of dreadful quiet, taking the hand of Marcus in her own, while the other she held outstretched toward Courtney and me; “See the blissful, holy happiness, that crowns the love of a virtuous man and woman! Marcus,—that is Ellinore’s revenge! *But this,—is mine!*”

There was a sudden flash, a sharp report, a heavy fall. This was the death of Marcus—this was Mabel’s revenge.

Back from the lifeless form, with a wild shriek, and then a wilder laugh, she fled—the poor, mad Mabel! For with the dying out of the dread calmness—that died out with the life she took—came madness.

We went to her, in a little while—when we had left the dead—I nearest, with soothing voices and gentle words, to call her back to reason. It was too late. Smiling, she waved us back; then, staring—she was dead. A subtle and deadly poison, that we found upon her, imbued her veins. She had long taken it, so the physician said—for this the ghastly pallor, and the dreadful redness of the cheek. At

the latest minute she had taken enough—poor soul! that with the dying of the man she loved, she might insure her death.

* * * * *

Mr. Livingston is dead. He died, they say, of that slow and wasting malady—consumption. I think it was his heart that broke, and pride that made it slow in breaking—for he loved Mabel.

I have seen Mrs. Livingston. Once, only, I saw her. It was last Sunday, at church. By a strange happening, Courtney and I were shown to the pew directly behind her. Her hair is silvery white, and she is an aged woman. But hers is not the whiteness, nor the age of time—for she too loved Mabel. The service over, I waited. For my life I could not help it; I so longed to tell her something of Mabel. Turning, she looked at me, then started back, while a flush quick swept over her face, and then a paleness; and then, frowning and queenly—she passed out. She will never know all that I know—unless, perchance, she read these pages. But when I have gone to England, she will be given a letter that will tell her where to find—alas! all that is left of her child to find—the grave of Mabel.

* * * * *

In a week we shall sail for England. Father is already there. He went with Chauncy Arnold, him who is more than friend—who is as dear as a much loved brother. Thanks to the talent and the energy of this dear friend—that with the help of Mabel had made all ready—my father, as Sir Reginald, takes easily his vast possessions and his place within the social world, of which he was so large a part.

Mrs. Edmonds will leave her western home forever, to live with us—Courtney and me. We—save Ned—love her best, and cannot count our happiness complete without her. She will come later, with Ned,—who henceforth one with his mother, in her home, will be one with us.

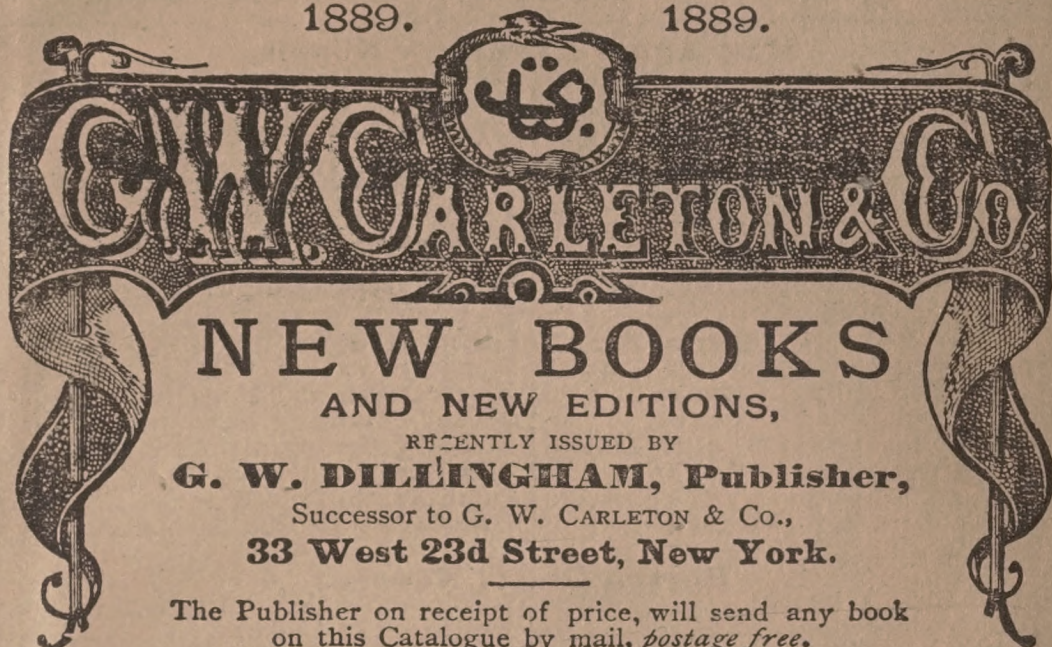
But we are not to go alone—Courtney and I. Back to fair England, back to her fair English home; back to the sunny garden where she played—to the spot in it of all the most beautiful; there where they whom she loved, still loving her, may sit and talk of her; there where we may look upon her green and blossoming grave: there we shall bear the ashes of our sister and our friend—there we shall bear all that is left to us of our loving and our loved Georgine.

THE END.

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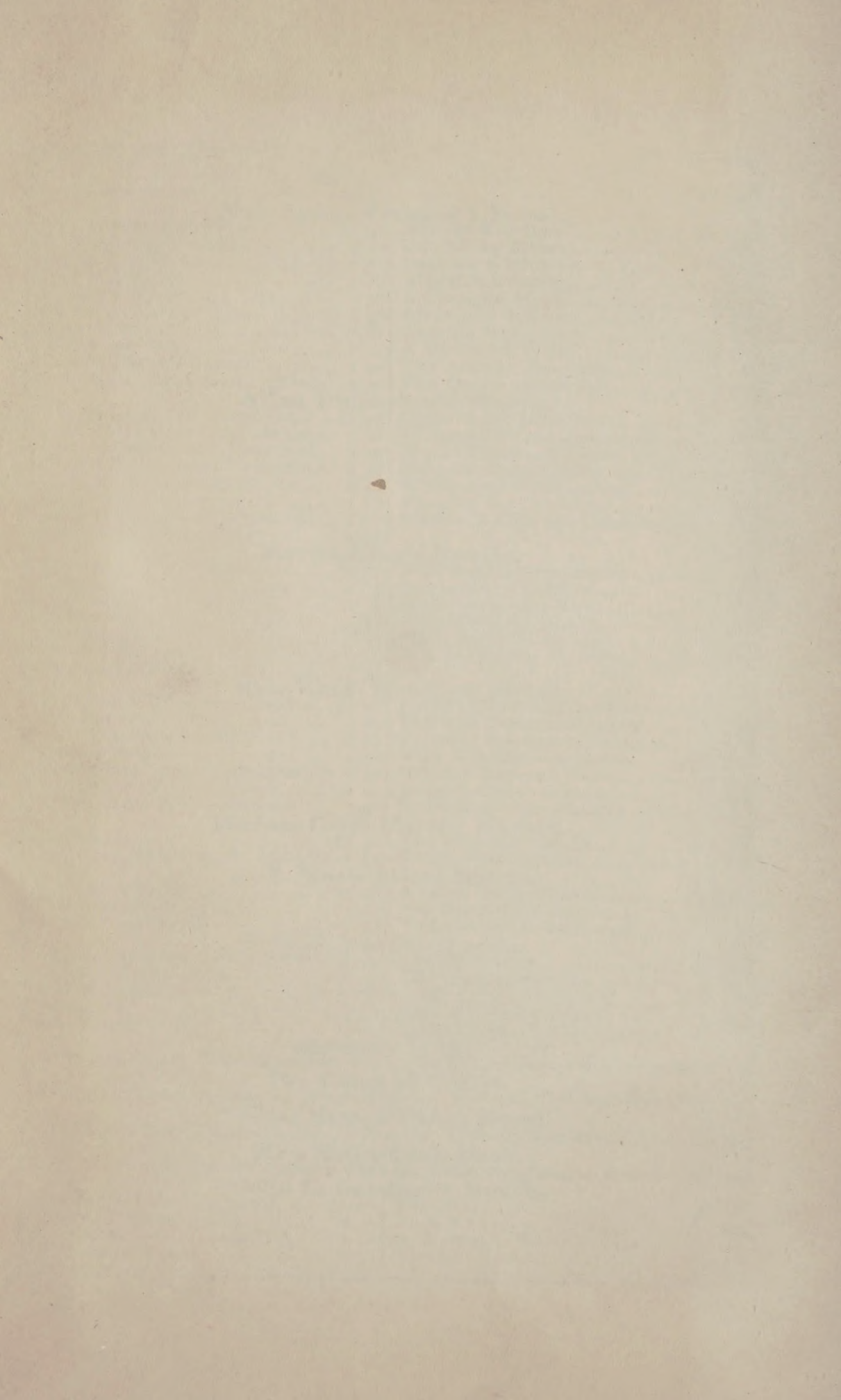
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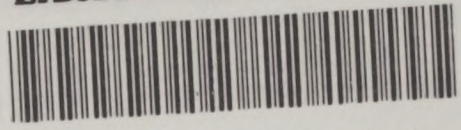
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